Art in Tibet

ISSUES IN TRADITIONAL TIBETAN ART

FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



EDITED BY

ERBERTO F. LO BUE

BRILL

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TENTH SEMINAR OF THE IATS, 2003

Art in Tibet

Brill's Tibetan Studies Library

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VOLUME 10/13

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Issues in Traditional Tibetan Art from the Seventh to the Twentieth Century

PIATS 2003: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003. Managing Editor: Charles Ramble.

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LEIDEN • BOSTON
2011

On the cover: Akṣobhya of the eastern quarter of a Vajradhātu-related mandala (private collection). (Photo: private owner of the collection)

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

International Association for Tibetan Studies. Seminar (10th : 2003 : Oxford, England)
Art in Tibet : issues in traditional Tibetan art from the seventh to the twentieth century : PIATS 2003 : Tibetan studies : proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003 / managing editor, Charles Ramble ; edited by Erberto F. Lo Bue.
p. cm. — (Brill's Tibetan studies library, ISSN 1568-6183 ; v. 10/13)
ISBN 978-90-04-15519-0 (hardback : alk. paper)
1. Art, Tibetan—Congresses. 2. Buddhist art—Tibet Region—Congresses. 3. Tibet Region—Civilization—Congresses. I. Ramble, Charles. II. Lo Bue, Erberto F. III. Title. IV. Title: Issues in traditional Tibetan art from the seventh to the twentieth century. V. Title: PIATS 2003 : Tibetan studies : proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003.

N7346.T5I67 2003a
709.51'5—dc23

2011034519

ISSN 1568-6183
ISBN 978 90 04 15519 0

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FOREWORD

I am pleased to present this volume—whose material was sent to the publisher in 2006, but which was published belatedly for reasons beyond my control—to both contributors and readers.

The criteria that guided my editorial work are best resumed by the following passages from the letter I sent to Charles Ramble, its General Editor, on the 12th November 2005:

> I made my editing method clear in the letter I sent you on the 13th April 2004: it entails freedom on the part of the authors to accept or refuse my corrections, but also on my part to accept or reject their papers. In that respect I did a thorough job during the first correction, pointing out not only mistakes in style, but also other errors, largely due to the deterioration of scholarly standards among the ever-increasing number of people interested in Tibetan art and wanting to take part in international seminars.
>
> My editing method has been appreciated by colleagues and scholars […], who have all earnestly thanked me for my corrections. Some contributors have even apologized for the poor standards of the texts they had originally sent and for the trouble they had caused to me […]
>
> For a long time I had meant to share the issue that I am going to raise in this letter with you. The reason why I did not was due to the fact that I wished to sound out the opinions of as many professional colleagues as possible about the matter. What eventually has encouraged me to write to you in these terms was a frank and long discussion I had with Per Kvaerne during his four-day stay here at the end of last month: concerning editing and assessments, Per recommended that I should adopt strict methodological criteria and, if necessary, a tough line.
>
> The situation of studies in Tibetan art history is not bright in spite of appearances: the number of publications has increased, but standards have not always followed on. Indeed the progress of research in the field of Tibetan art history has been slow in the last fifty-five years if one takes into account the scores of people involved in it. Very few important books such as Jackson's *History of Tibetan Painting* have been issued since the publication of Tucci's *Indo-Tibetica* and *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, the outcome of less than a score of years' work by a single scholar. If one takes into account the circumstance that neither Tucci nor Jackson regard themselves as art historians strictly speaking, that affords an idea of the scarce output by present 'specialists', including myself.
>
> The methodology—based on the study of Tibetan historical records—established by Tucci is increasingly forgotten or ignored by a number of

so-called specialists in Tibetan art. I feel that to some extent the lowering of standards in that field was indirectly encouraged in past IATS seminars through accepting a number of papers by people trained neither as art historians nor as tibetologists. On the last occasion, in Oxford, I was not the only scholar to wonder if there had been a proper screening of the abstracts: the standard of some papers was appalling, and that was noticed not only by colleagues, but—what is more embarassing—even by students, who in some cases might have presented better papers than those presented by some panelists lacking a methodology both in art historical and in tibetological terms: a young and promising scholar pointed out that his old teacher "would have kicked them out" of the panel; *o tempora, o mores*!

My experiences not only as a participant and chairperson in Oxford two years ago, but also as guest-editor of twenty-four papers devoted to Tibetan art for *The Tibet Journal* (2001–2003) as well as of the twenty-one papers devoted to the same subject for the proceedings of the Oxford seminar, have shown that:

1) more than half of the contributors dealing with Tibetan art are not 'tibetologists' strictly speaking, inasmuch as they do not know either written or spoken Tibetan;

2) only few appear to have been properly trained as art historians;

3) fewer are professional scholars;

4) most have a poor proficiency in foreign languages, some knowing only one besides their mother tongue, which in some cases they are unable to write properly.

It is true that—in spite of being trained neither in art history nor in the Tibetan language—some art collectors, art dealers and museum staff have contributed interesting discoveries to our knowledge of Tibetan art; but others are just enthusiasts and their papers represent no contribution to research in the field. The same applies to architects not relating their work to tibetological studies, to some Tibetan-speaking freelance researchers having no proper academic training, and even to Tibetan scholars unwilling to study and verify critically their own sources or unable to update their research with well-established findings by Western tibetologists.

No wonder that none of the main scholars in the field of Tibetan art history—David Jackson, Heather Stoddard […] and Roberto Vitali—has applied to participate in the art history panel in Bonn [Königswinter]: they may well feel that, under the present circumstances, they have very little to learn.

I feel it is high time that tibetologists regain possession of Tibetan art historical studies, and in particular that young tibetologists interested in Tibetan art and having a sound historical and/or tibetological training should be encouraged to present papers at the expense of people not qualifying for presentation, whichever the latter's academic status may be. It is in that spirit, as well as in the light of the above considerations,

> that I have drafted my assessments of the abstracts presented for the panel I am going to co-chair with Christian Luczanits in Bonn [Königswinter] next year.

I wish to thank both Charles Ramble and Patricia Radder for their cooperation, as well as the contributors for their patience.

Erberto Lo Bue
University of Bologna

HISTORY

A PROLEGOMENON TO THE PALLADIUM OF TIBET, THE JOWO (JO BO) ŚĀKYAMUNI[1]

CAMERON DAVID WARNER
AARHUS UNIVERSITET

For devout Tibetans, the Jowo Śākyamuni[2] (*Jo bo shākya mu ne*) is not a statue, but a proxy (*sku tshab*) of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni at age twelve in Lhasa, Tibet. The Jowo resides in a temple commonly known as the Jokhang (*Jo khang*), but more appropriately called the Rasa Trülnang Tsuklakhang (*Ra sa 'phrul snang gtsug lag khang*). Both scholars and travel agencies have called this temple Tibet's *sancta sanctorum* (holiest of holies), and have hailed its most important inhabitant, the Jowo Śākyamuni, the palladium[3] of Tibet. Before the presentation of this paper in 2003, only a few studies on the Jowo Śākyamuni had been published. Central questions regarding the statue had never been solved and many other pertinent questions had never been raised at all. In the years between the conference presentation and the publication of this paper, additional research has been completed on the history of the Jowo Śākyamuni.[4] This paper represents my preliminary reflections on the subject prior to the completion of my disserta-

[1] For their inspiration and guidance I would like to thank Tsultrim Gyentsen (Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan), Robert Orsi, Smita Lahiri, Janet Gyatso, Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp, Hubert Decleer, and Roberto Vitali. I would also like to thank Erberto Lo Bue for his editorial assistance.

[2] Jowo is most often translated as "lord", and is often seen preceding proper names from the seventh through eleventh centuries. On the etymology of *jo bo* and its relationship with *rjes*, see Beckwith 1977: 190.

[3] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, referring to a statue as a "palladium" derives from, "an image of the goddess Pallas (Athene) in the citadel of Troy, whose presence was believed to guarantee the safety of the city". In extended usage a palladium is, "a thing on which the safety of a nation, institution, privilege, etc. is believed to depend; a source of protection, a safeguard". In a sense, the Ark of the Covenant was the palladium of Israel and white elephants were once palladia of Siam.

[4] Walsh's early study (1938: 535–40) is now out-dated. Until 2008, Blondeau (1995) and Sørensen (1994 and 2007) constituted the most important work on the history of the cult of the Jowo. For a recent art historical treatment, see von Schroeder 2001: 926–29.

tion, *The Precious Lord: The History and Practice of the Cult of the Jowo Śākyamuni in Lhasa, Tibet*.[5]

The dissertation begins with an introduction to the relationship between the Jowo Śākyamuni and the phenomenon of sacred statuary in Mahāyāna Buddhism. It continues with a close reading of the earliest Jowo-narratives in Tibetan historical literature, especially the *Pronouncement of Ba* (*Sba bzhed*), *Vase-shaped Pillar Testament* (*Bka' chems ka khol ma*), and *Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies* (*Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*), in order to demonstrate the evolution of the significance of the Jowo from a Chinese dowry item to the Tibetan national palladium. The etiology of the Jowo, the death and absence of the Buddha, connects him to the pan-Asian practice of venerating specific images as the supposed unique "First Image of the Buddha". My dissertation contains the first investigation of the history and significance of the renovations to the Jowo's chapel in the period of the thirteenth through twentieth centuries. In 1409, Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa crowned the Jowo, changing his doctrinal and iconographic representations. A multidisciplinary perspective, combining texts, photographs, and ethnographic interviews in Tibet, Nepāl, and India, explicates the controversial implications of the Jowo's appearance, and serves as a model for the study of Tibetan lived religion. The paper in this volume has been updated to reflect the results of my dissertation and is focused on some aspects of the history of the cult of the Jowo Śākyamuni not present in the dissertation.

For the purposes of this paper, I touch upon four historical periods: 1) the imperial period (7th–9th CE), 2) the early "Later Diffusion of Buddhism" (*bstan pa'i phyi dar*) (11th–13th CE), 3) the lifetime of the 5th Dalai Lama, Nawang Lozang Gyatso (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho) (1617–1682) and 4) the latter part of the 20th century. Through an examination of key examples, I explore the rise of the cult of the Jowo, its development over time, how it has been appropriated by various political figures, and its continuing importance today. As this brief introduction will show, the Jowo is a multivalent icon. Furthermore, any study of his cultural importance and social function must take this multivalency into account by approaching his significance from numerous perspectives.

[5] See Warner 2008.

THE RISE OF THE CULT

In the early Later Diffusion of Buddhism, Tibetan historians produced several texts, each of which represent an attempt to create a coherent myth of Tibet's dynastic period; one of the central characters in this myth was the Jowo Śākyamuni. The Jowo figures prominently in the the *Mirror Illuminating the Royal Geneaologies, The Pronouncement of Ba, The Large Ecclesiastical History of India and Tibet* (*Mkhas pa lde'u*), *An Ecclesiastical History: The Flower Essence, Sweet Nectar* (*Nyang ral chos 'byung*), and the *vita*-literature of King Songtsen Gampo (*Srong btsan sgam po*) (c. 549–649),[6] such as the *Vase-shaped Pillar Testament*, and the *The Collected Maṇi Teachings* (*Maṇi Bka' 'bum*), just to name a few examples. Passages of these texts clearly demonstrate that by the 11th century the Jowo represented the embodiment of Buddhism in Tibet. For Tibetans, the Jowo possesses unique power and supernatural importance derived from its fundamentally intercultural status, an identity inseparable from processes by which Buddhism was translated and exchanged in between China, India and Tibet, as well as between Buddhist and non-Buddhist Tibetans. To attempt to tease out a singular definitive narrative of the early history of the Jowo from this web of interaction is folly. As it was aptly put by Sørensen, "it is a hapless task to venture to verify historically…" some of the most famous Jowo stories of the imperial period (1994: 595). Rather, it would be more productive were we to read early Later Diffusion of Buddhism history as myth, or better yet, construction of myths of the earlier imperial period. From this point of view, our incongruous sources represent ingenious uses of evolving archetypes, a process which might reflect varied, at times competing, perspectives on Tibet's first conversion to Buddhism, as well as refigurations of what Buddhism ought to mean to future Tibetans.

Tibetans and tibetologists have, perhaps suprisingly, overlooked the basic structure of the myth of the early history of the Jowo. It begins with King Prasenajit of Kosala who longed to see the face of the Buddha while he was in heaven preaching the dharma to his mother.[7]

[6] On the birth and death dates of Songtsen Gampo I follow the calculations of Sørensen 1994: 199, 349, *passim*.

[7] The beginning of the myth is a version of the popular pan-Asian story of the creation of the first Buddha Śākyamuni statue. Buddhologists have come to refer to that statue as the Udayana Buddha because in some versions of the myth Viśvakarman cre-

Consequently, the king sent the artisan Viśvakarman to heaven for the purpose of creating a portrait-sculpture of the Buddha resulting in two statues, one of which was the Jowo Śākyamuni. The Buddha intended for the two portraits to serve as mimetic envoys after he passed into complete awakening (*parinirvāṇa*). Later the Jowo Śākyamuni arrived in China. At some point in the 630s, King Songtsen Gampo took a Nepalese consort.[8] Known to the Nepalese as Bhṛkuṭī, and to Tibetans as Tritsun (Khri btsun), she was thought to have brought as dowry the other portrait-sculpture of the Buddha known to Tibetans as the Jowo Mikyö Dorjé. And in 639, Songtsen Gampo miraculously assisted in the erection of the Rasa Trülnang Tsuklakang to house this statue (Vitali 1990: 72–73). In 641[9] the Chinese princess, Wencheng Gongzhu[10] (628–680/2)[11] as part of her dowry for becoming a consort of King Songtsen Gampo,[12] brought the Jowo Śākyamuni to Tibet. Wencheng Gongzhu built the Ramoché temple to house the Jowo Śākyamuni and, according to the *The Pronouncement of Ba*, also resided there (Wangdu and Diemberger 2000).[13]

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ated it for King Udayana of Vatsa. But there are some versions of the myth in which King Udayana is replaced by King Prasenajit as in the *Vase-shaped Pillar Testament*. For an example of the myth, which features King Prasenajit, see Jo bo A ti sha 1989: 19 *passim*. For a comparison of the legendary creation of the Jowo Śākyamuni with other stories of the First Image/Body of the Buddha, see Warner 2008: 160–98. For a survey of secondary literature on the Udayana Buddha, see Carter 1990.

[8] The historical veracity of the Nepalese princess is still under debate. Giuseppe Tucci and those who follow his line of argument hold that the Nepalese princess never existed; Richardson and others take the opposite track, favoring the abundance of indirect evidence in support of her existence. Cf. Tucci 1962, Vitali 1990: 71–73, Sørensen 1994: 199 *passim*, Richardson 1998: 208.

[9] Von Schroeder has suggested the Jowo currently in the Rasa Trülnang is a Nepalese work dating to the 11th–13th centuries. The age of the “original” Jowo and its possible late replicas is a matter of contention among scholars and Buddhists both inside and outside of Tibet.

[10] Tibetan sources maintain that she was a daughter of the emperor, but Chinese sources hold that she was a member of imperial lineage, not a daughter of the emperor. See Richardson 1998: 208.

[11] On Wencheng’s dates cf. Richardson 1998: 208–09; in *The Old Tibetan Annals*, she is said to have been cremated in the sheep year 682, see Bacot *et al*. 1940.

[12] It has been proposed that Wencheng was actualally implored the king of the Nepal and the emperor of China to obtain their daughtersy intended to be the wife of Songtsen’s son Gungri/song Gungtsen (Gung ri/srong gung btsan) (r. 641–645/6). Cf. Beckwith 1987: 19 and Sørensen 1994: 200, 355.

[13] In one recension of the *Vase-shaped Pillar Testament*, Songtsen Gampo *qua* Avalokiteśvara is ultimately responsible for the Jowo’s presence in Tibet for he personally implored the king of Nepal and the emperor of China to obtain their daughters. See

Later, under circumstances confusing to Tibetan historians and tibetologists, the two Jowos were switched. For almost a thousand years, the Jowo Mikyö Dorjé (*Jo bo mi bskyod rdo rje*), supposedly from Nepal, has resided in the "Chinese" Ramoché temple; the Jowo brought to Tibet from China, the Jowo Śākyamuni, has resided in the "Nepalese/Newari" Rasa Trülnang Tsuklakang temple. Tibetologists, most notably Hugh Richardson, Roberto Vitali, and Per Sørensen have questioned the veracity of most of the elements of the etiological myth for switching the Jowos. Though their work is extremely helpful, in contrast to my predecessors, I read our sources for insights into 11th century Tibetan historiography and myth-making, not in service of present empiricist historiography.

In 11th century Tibetan historical writing, the Jowo Śākyamuni is mentioned many times in connection with Wencheng Gongzhu, her 8th century successor Jincheng Gongzhu (d.739),[14] the Tibetan ministers opposed to Buddhism, and invasions from other countries. The *Pronouncement of Ba*, our earliest source for the history of the Jowo Śākyamuni,[15] does not mention the Jowo Śākyamuni by name, but instead refers to an object I call the "proto-Jowo" who possesses rudimentary elements of the Jowo Śākyamuni's biography.[16] From this stratum of Tibetan historiography it is clear that, almost immediately upon arrival in Lhasa, Tibetans deemed the Jowo Śākyamuni exceptional, for he, and no other statue, was repeatedly the focus of Buddhist and anti-Buddhist, Tibetan and anti-Tibetan activity. The passages from Tibetan historical writing concerning the Jowo illustrate three interrelated concerns: 1) internal threats to Buddhism,[17] 2) external threats to the Tibetan empire (which had been slowly associating itself with Buddhism) and 3) the supernatural power of the Jowo. The interplay of these three concerns encodes the Jowo with value beyond his original status as dowry. The Jowo might then be understood as a fetish—a place where socially constructed value is fixed, as well as a site that

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Atiśa 1989: 134, 153–54, and my analysis of the significance of this passage for the Songtsen Gampo emanational triad in Warner 2008: 95–108.

[14] According to Sørensen (1994: 355) Jincheng arrived in Tibet to be the consort of Tridé Tsuktsen (Khri lde gtsug brtsan) (b. 704, r. 712–754) in 710.

[15] Though at least four recensions of the *Pronouncement of Ba* exist, according to van Schaik and Iwao (2008) the earliest one can now be dated to the 9th century.

[16] Warner 2008: 57–92.

[17] This point has been stressed by Karmay 1988a: 4–6.

concretizes systems of thinking in play.[18] One example of the Jowo as fetish is the many Jowo tales in which he is the focus of anti-Buddhist activity. In each passage, Buddhists or those opposed to Buddhism moved him, buried him, and even sealed him behind a wall. Some of these tales are common to the biographies of other Buddhist statues in Asia; they are best read as explanations to later generations for why they ought to venerate the statue. In one evocative story (Sørensen 1994: 591–608), Tibetans opposed to Buddhism attempted to return the proto-Jowo to India via Mangyul (*Mang yul*), but he became incredibly heavy, and eventually would not move any further and was thus abandoned in a plain outside Lhasa. In this story, we see a reaffirmation of the Jowo's Indian origin, as well as his supernatural agency.

As was stated before, the Jowo Śākyamuni is fundamentally an intercultural art object. This is clearly demonstrated by 11th century Tibetan historiography. One of the most popular Jowo stories—how he came to be housed in the Rasa Trülnang—is a perfect example of the Jowo's intercultural status. Tibetan historians struggled to explain why the Jowo Śākyamuni was moved into the Rasa Trülnang, and so have tibetologists. Hugh Richardson (1971) discounted the commonly held notion that the Jowo was moved to hide him from an invading Chinese army, but he did not provide an adequate alternative explanation for why he was moved. Roberto Vitali (1990: 90–91) adds that there are two possible justifications for this fear: either the invading army was in fact the mission of the imperial envoy Wang Xuanze or, following Nyangral Nyima Özer's *(Nyang ral Nyi ma'i 'od zer) A Precious Garland: The Hagiographies of the Three Ancestor Dharma-King Mahābodhisattvas (Byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po chos rgyal mes dbon rnam gsum gyi rnam thar rin po che'i phreng ba)* (12th century), there were Chinese spies in Lhasa who considered stealing the Jowo before they determined he was inauthentic. It then appears that the Jowo was either lost or forgotten until a second Chinese princess, Jincheng Gongzhu, rediscovered the statue and instituted a Buddha memorial ritual (Skt. *buddhānusmṛti*) (Tib. *zhal mthong ba*). It is difficult to say when the Jowo was permanently established in the Rasa Trülnang. Some sources place him in the Ramoché (*Ra mo che*) after Jincheng passed away in 739. Later, he was supposedly removed once again by anti-Buddhist Tibetans during the persecution of

[18] I owe this use of the term fetish to the historical and philosophical reflections on the study of fetishism by Pietz 1985.

Buddhism under King Langdarma (*Glang dar ma*), who saw him as "an ominous symbol of Chinese lore and imperialism" (Sørensen 1994: 593–94). Recently, Hubert Decleer theorized, based on the 1989 Kansu edition as well as the Tök (*Stog*) Palace edition of the *Vase-shaped Pillar Testament*, that the Jowo Śākyamuni was still in the Ramoché at the time of Atiśa's stay in Tibet (1042–1054).[19] The Atiśa materials cited by Decleer suggest that the Indian scholar was aware of the Jowo, due to his fame, before he arrived in Lhasa in 1048 or 1052.

Keeping in mind Sørensen's comment about untangling various stories of the Jowo's concealment, we might be moved to conclude that it is impossible to say precisely when the Jowo was put in the Rasa Trülnang once and for all. But, this is not to say that Tibetan sources have nothing to teach us. From reading the *The Pronouncement of Ba* versions of the hiding of the Jowo Śākyamuni (Stein ed. 1961: 3; Mgon po rgyal mtshan ed. 1980/82: 3–4) two more points become significant: 1) the two Jowos were switched due to the fear that an invading *Chinese* army would steal the Jowo Śākyamuni, and 2) that Jowo was rediscovered by a second *Chinese* princess. Therefore, we see, in 11th century Tibetan historical writing, at least three examples reaffirming the Jowo Śākyamuni's Chinese cultural cachet: 1) his earlier status as part of an imperial princess' dowry, 2) a Chinese army wanted to steal him back, and afterwards 3) Tibetans forgot about him until another Chinese princess rediscovered him. These salient moments in the story demonstrate the value of the Jowo to the Chinese and, concomitantly, how the historiographer was aware that the greater the apparent value of the Jowo to the Chinese, the greater the value of the Jowo would be to his Tibetan readers.

Despite the historical problems, when taken together, the various explanations for the moving of the Jowo shed some light on the cult of the statue. First of all, we can see the importance placed on the statue by 11th century historiographers and redactors. In their minds, the arrival of the Jowo Śākyamuni marked the arrival of Buddhism, and his

[19] Decleer 1998: 87–89, 99. His conjecture is based on one sentence (Jo bo Atisha 1989: 2–3): "Even though rNal 'byor pa tried to catch his attention: "Paṇḍita-la, the deity Shākyamune (you intended to visit) resides in the Ra mo che (temple, not here in this one)!," he didn't listen and entered the 'Phrul snang instead." For this sentence, I prefer, "Rnyal 'byor pa said, 'Honorable Paṇḍi ta, the Lha śākya mu ne resides in the Ra mo che,' but [this] was not heard, [he] departed for the [Ra sa] 'phrul snang [gtsug lag khang]." Until this single sentence, stuck amidst a dreamlike sequence that places Atiśa within the text he supposedly discovered, is corroborated, I think we must not draw any conclusions as to the Jowo's whereabouts in the mid-11th century.

presence thereafter signified the continual living presence of the Buddha in their country; they wanted to show that the earliest Buddhists in Tibet were not about to let go of this particular manifestation even if it meant threatening the safety of the country, in effect, making the Jowo a central character in the story of the Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism. Furthermore, this was the first instance of Tibetans fearing that the Chinese presented a threat to Buddhism in Tibet. Lastly, from the *A Precious Garland: The Hagiographies of the Three Ancestor Dharma-King Mahābodhisattvas*, it is clear that from at least the time of Nyangral (1136–1204), Tibetans themselves questioned the authenticity of the Jowo.

THE 5th DALAI LAMA'S POLITICALLY POWERFUL PERSONAL MIRACLES

Because the Jowo has been a popular authoritative interlocutor for Tibetan visionaries, one way to begin understanding the cult of the Jowo Śākyamuni would be to read Tibetan history from his point of view. Who traveled to Lhasa and visited the Jowo? Who controlled the Rasa Trülnang? What role have the Jowo and the visions he has bestowed played in Tibetan politics? Have the clergy appropriated the symbolic power of the Jowo for their own political goals? In the minds of Tibetans, right or wrong, Lhasa is intimately connected with the events of the dynastic period. Because of this powerful symbolism, Lhasa and its environs have been a contested religio-political space for centuries. The most famous example of this phenomenon is, of course, the actions of the 5th Dalai Lama Nawang Lozang Gyatso (1617–1682) and his favorite regent, Desi Sangyé Gyatso (*Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*) (1653–1705). The 5th Dalai Lama's experiences with the Jowo are an apt example of a Tibetan's personal relationship with the Jowo, the miracles attributed to him, and his political significance.

At the time of the death of the 5th Dalai Lama, Lhasa was the capital of Tibet. Due to his activities, the Potala Palace and the Rasa Trülnang were the preeminent seats of power. The 5th Dalai Lama saw himself as another reincarnation in a line of dharma kings (Tib. *chos rgyal*, Skt. *dharmarājā*) who were themselves manifestations of Avalokiteśvara, a line which, in the mind of the 5th Dalai Lama, connected through Pakpa Lodrö Gyentsen (*'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan*) (1235–1280) all the way back to Songtsen Gampo.

Through both explicit actions and secret visions, the 5th Dalai Lama caused the Rasa Trülnang and the Jowo to be the most important religio-political matrix in Tibet. In 1637, the 5th Dalai Lama had a throne made in front of the Jowo for Gushri Khan and established a religious relationship with him, which later had far-reaching political consequences. In the following year, the 5th Dalai Lama took full ordination in the Rasa Trülnang and subsequently had many visions of Songtsen Gampo in the temple (Karmay 1988b: 8, 40, 49). By writing a catalogue cum history (*dkar chag*) for the temple, he also participated in establishing a specific symbolic interpretation of the temple's contents. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that the 5th Dalai Lama, or any other political figure, explicitly used the Jowo *only* for his own political agenda. The Jowo achieved his symbolic power by virtue of Buddhists having faith in and what he represents: this must have been true for the 5th Dalai Lama as well.

The increased political significance of the Rasa Trülnang after the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama did not bode well for the building, nor its famous inhabitant, because from then on, if an outside force wanted to take control of the capital, and/or attack Tibetans, the Rasa Trülnang was a prime target. For example, in 1717, the Jungar Mongols sacked Lhasa during an attack upon the Qoshot Mongols and their leader Lhazang Khan (Lha bzang khāng) (d.1717). In the fighting, the Rasa Trülnang was heavily damaged and the Jowo Śākyamuni *might* have been damaged or destroyed (Ferrari 1958: 86). We must be cautious on this crucial point, for Luciano Petech, the editor of Ferrari 1958, did not provide enough justification for making this suggestion. Rather, it is safer to say only that the invading army attacked the Rasa Trülnang because it was the seat of the Dalai Lama's cabinet (*bka' shag*), and that the building and its contents might have been damaged in the ensuing fight. Again, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (*rig gnas gsar brje*) in 1966, Tibetan students, who were incited to riot by Chinese Red Guards, ransacked the Rasa Trülnang destroying many statues (French 2003: 197–200). It is believed by some, but difficult to prove definitively, that the Jowo Śākyamuni was damaged or even destroyed in this or a similar incident, and consequently rebuilt for the opening of the temple in 1976.[20]

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[20] Ril 'bur sprul sku 1987: 322, and n. 23. According to Ril 'bur sprul sku (1923–), the Jowo Śākyamuni was never removed from Tibet during the Cultural Revolution and only slightly damaged. However, "Centuries-old religious objects were smashed and all

Whether the original Jowo was destroyed on one of his numerous adventures around Tibet in the dynastic period or whether he was destroyed later, we are left with the conclusion that the present Jowo might be a replica or at least the result of numerous restorations. The attempt to answer this question definitively appears to be a red herring, for the terms of this discussion have yet to be defined and the significance of this conclusion remains unexplored. Instead, we ought to focus our attention on the effect that questions of authenticity have had on the past cult of the Jowo and the effects new technologies and the present political circumstances have had on the recent cult.

COMMUNIST ATTEMPTS AT APPROPRIATION OF THE JOWO ŚĀKYAMUNI

The importance of reincarnated lamas to Tibetan religion and society cannot be overstated. Hence, when the Chinese government decided to reinstate the practice of searching for candidates and enthroning young boys, it was only under condition that they would have complete control over it and that it would serve to support their view of Tibet as having been an inseparable part of the Chinese empire. One of the examples that the present Chinese government gives for Tibet having been a vassal of Imperial China is that reincarnations of high lamas (*sprul sku*) were chosen through a method of selecting lots from a golden urn, a method the Manchu emperor Qianlong (1711–1799) attempted to impose upon Tibetans. Originally, Qianlong intended for the golden urn ceremony to be performed in front of his portrait in the Potala Palace. The use of the golden urn method in the 1990s also provided the Chinese authorities with a means by which they could ensure that the boys chosen as reincarnated lamas would not rebel against the state.[20]

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copper, bronze, silver, and gold items were carefully labeled, removed and transported to China. The most sacred statue, the Jo Atisha in Tsuklagkhang temple in Lhasa, was destroyed." It is unclear to me which statue would be referred to as "the most sacred statue, the Jo Atisha." According to Heather Stoddard (1994: 169–73), Red Guards used the temple as a pigsty during the Cultural Revolution, which is oddly reminiscent of a similar story in the *The Pronouncement of Ba* regarding a brief suppression of Buddhism in the Yarlung (Yar lung) dynasty period.

[20] Robbie Barnett, 1 September, 2003 (oral communication).

It was not the Communists' original plan to perform the golden urn ceremony themselves. Instead, they gave the responsibility of selecting reincarnated lamas to the 7th Panchen Lama, Trinlé Lhündrup Chökyi Gyentsen (*'Phrin las lhun grub chos kyi rgyal mtshan*) (1938–1989).[21] The 7th Panchen Lama was a considerable religious authority figure among Tibetans, due in part to the fact that he was highly critical of the Chinese treatment of Tibetans, and jailed because of his views. In a speech shortly before his death, the Panchen Lama vowed:

> Now that the Central Government has asked me to finalize all the reincarnated lamas, I will invite Jowo Śākyamuni himself and seek his help. Jowo Śākyamuni is revered by the followers of all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. I will select the reincarnation from the top three candidates by rolling dough balls in front of the statue of Jowo Śākyamuni. If there is still a mistake, then I will invite the Buddha himself. This is my opinion. ... Today, you have the opportunity to air your views on the issue of selecting reincarnated lamas.[22]

This quote demonstrates that even the Panchen Lama needed to rely on the Jowo Śākyamuni for the process of selecting reincarnated lamas to be considered authentic. According to the beliefs of the Panchen Lama, the Jowo Śākyamuni's authority is so supreme that it is above sectarian rivalry, and second to only the Buddha himself. The Jowo has served as a careful watchman over the religious development of many young, politically important, Tibetan boys. For example, in the *Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, the Fourth Dalai Lama Yöntan Gyatso (*Yon tan rgya mtsho*) (1589–1617) was depicted as having insisted on having his monastic ordination ceremony in front of the Jowo (Elverskog 2001). In 1638, the Fifth Dalai Lama also took full ordination in the Rasa Trülnang (Karmay 1998b: 8, 40, 49). And biographical evidence shows that in the first half of the 20th century ordination ceremonies in front of the Jowo were once popular.[23]

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[21] According to the Chinese method of counting the rebirths of the Panchen Lama, Trinlé Lhündrup Chökyi Gyentsen was the 10th Panchen Lama, and Gyaicain Norbu (Rgyal mtshan nor bu) is the 11th Panchen Lama.

[22] *Heart of the Panchen Lama: Statements and a Petition: 1962–1989*. Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamsala, India. This statement is excerpted and translated from the Tibetan transcription of the late Panchen Lama's taped statement at Tashilhünpo (*Bkra shis lhun po*) Monastery, Shigatse (*Gzhis ka rtse*), on 24 January, four days before his death on 28 January 1989.

[23] Dudjom Rinpoche (*Bdud 'joms rin po che*) officially recognized the young Taré Lhamo (Tā re lha mo) in front of the Jowo. See Padma 'od gsal mtha' yas 1997: 134.

To my knowledge, Chinese authorities have performed the golden urn ceremony three times since their invasion of Tibet, each time in front of the Jowo Śākyamuni statue. They have performed the ritual in front of the Jowo because they hope Tibetans will deem the controversial ritual authentic because of the Jowo's authorizing presence. In the instance of the selection of the 8th Panchen Lama, Communist authorities were in dire need of as much legitimacy as they could muster. Against the wishes of the Dalai Lama, of the abbot and monks of the Panchen Lama's monastery, as well as of the opinions of Tibet's leading religious figures, a boy named Gyaincain Norbu was confirmed on November 29, 1995 in the Rasa Trülnang as the reincarnation of the 7th Panchen Lama. However, due to the contentious nature of his selection and of the ritual itself, the golden urn ceremony was not a public event. It took place at 2:00 a.m., in conditions of great secrecy, behind locked doors, and with soldiers stationed on the roof of the temple (Panchen Lama 1997: 62). Similarly, an additional ceremony of this type took place in front of the Jowo Śākyamuni: the confirmation of the 17th Karmapa, Orgyen Trinlé Dorjé (*O rgyan phrin las rdo rje*).

The Rasa Trülnang remains the symbolic center of the Tibetan notion of "the integration of religion and politics" (*chos srid zung 'brel*). Before the Cultural Revolution, the Rasa Trülnang played host each year to the Great Prayer Festival (*Smon lam chen mo*); the Great Prayer Festival served as a ritual in which the religious establishment reasserted their control over secular polity. When Chinese authorities, perhaps unaware of the symbolic power of the ritual, allowed it to be revived in 1986 as an example of their commitment to religious tolerance, Tibetan monks used it as an opportunity to protest the Chinese occupation. This pattern of protest continued throughout the 1980s (cf. Barnett 1994: 238–58). In the 1990s, the simple act of circumambulating the Rasa Trülnang became an important form of protest (cf. Schwartz 1994 *inter alia*). As Tibetans have become an increasingly smaller minority in their own capital, the Rasa Trülnang and its inhabitant, the Jowo Śākyamuni, have been at the center of Tibetan political expression.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Through exploring how and why the Jowo was considered to be the palladium of Tibet, this paper seeks to illuminate the ways in which the

statue's role in society is multivalent. The Jowo began as a sign of external power and of a new cultural sophistication, which would transform Tibetan society and wrest power from the hands of anti-Buddhists. Now he has become a sign devoid of a single signification: for the Chinese authorities he demonstrates that, from the very beginning, Tibetan culture has been dependent upon Chinese culture. For Buddhist Tibetans, the Jowo signifies that to be Tibetan is to be Buddhist, not Communist, and that Tibetans became Buddhists partly as a result of defeating the Chinese in battle and winning the Jowo as reparations. Because the Jowo is the palladium of Tibet, his authenticity is of central concern to some, while his control is of concern to all. As the Panchen Lama said, "Jowo Śākyamuni is revered by the followers of all schools of Tibetan Buddhism," and hundreds of thousands of Tibetans worship him every year, each with their own supplication, whether they gaze into his face in Lhasa or at his picture at home. Today, the Jowo Śākyamuni is not gone. Due to his presence in the Rasa Trülnang, to the availability of pictures of him to Tibetan exiles, as well as Chinese television broadcasts of the golden urn ceremonies, the Jowo is more ubiquitous now than ever. With each pilgrimage, each protest, each defeat of iconoclasm, another mirror is added to reflect and recreate all of his representations and value.

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RME RU RNYING PA, AN EXTANT IMPERIAL-PERIOD CHAPEL IN LHASA

André Alexander

SITE INTRODUCTION

Early post-imperial Tibetan sources tell us that a number of temples and monastic residences were built in proximity to the Lha sa Gtsug lag khang during the reign of king Khri Gtsug lde btsan, also known as Ral pa can (r. ca. 815–836). The sources offer contradictory lists, but a Rme ru lha khang seems to occur in all of them. In the 14th century chronicle, *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, the six sites are described as Rme ru and Ka ru to the east of the Gtsug lag khang, Dga' ba and Dga' ba'i 'od to the south, and Bran khang and Bran khang tha ma to the north.

According to the monastery's own oral tradition, Rme ru was built next to a boulder recognized as an auspicious site by Ral pa can's ancestor, emperor Srong btsan sgam po (died ca. 650), who allegedly planted ritual prayer-flags on the boulder. The founder of the Rme ru lha khang is named as Myang (or Nyang) Sha' mi go cha, apparently a younger brother of the monk-minister Myang Ting nge 'dzin.

This temple can be identified with the extant Dzam bha la chapel of Rme ru rnying pa monastery. Sometime in the second half of the 17th century, the surrounding site became a property of Gnas chung monastery, but the chapel itself continued to be managed to this day by Rme ru grva tshang. Under the auspices of Gnas chung, during the second half of the 19th century, the monastery was enlarged to its present size by the addition of a three-storey assembly hall and residential wings (*grva shag* or *shag 'khor*) framing a central courtyard.

THE RME RU RNYING PA RESTORATION PROJECT

Although little known to outsiders because of its secluded location in the heart of the eastern section of Bar skor Street (sometimes spelt Bar

’khor), the circular road that leads around the Lha sa Gtsug lag khang, and despite the continued absence of its most important dignitary, the Gnas chung chos skyong oracle (in exile since 1959), the re-opened monastery has become a focus for the local Buddhist community. Rme ru rnying pa regularly attracts hundreds of participants for an annual prayer festival, *ma ni dung phyur*, held during the fourth lunar month, and often lasting much longer [see plate 3, showing the festival taking place]. Under a very unusual arrangement, the monastic compound is shared between three separate monastic communities and, since modern times, also by lay tenants. During the 1960s, the monastery was vandalized, and the assembly hall was subsequently used as grain store. Initial restoration began in 1985 under the auspices of ’Bras spungs and Gong dkar Chos sde monasteries.

Rme ru rnying pa affords an increasingly rare example of an old Lhasa ‘courtyard’ (*sgo ra*), as houses are being commonly referred to in Lhasa. The open courtyard space in front of the monastery’s main building constitutes space that is half public and half private [see plate 1]. Clouds of incense fill the air and worshippers come and go almost incessantly on days designated for worship according to the lunar calendar, but in quieter moments, the atmosphere can be rather intimate. Residents do their laundry or sit out on the open galleries, children fly kites on the roof and women sit at stalls selling scarves, incense and alcohol to be offered in the chapels of the protector deities. Built in fine detail to modest proportions, the main temple hall is an important example of Tibetan architecture of the 19th century, and it has preserved superb wall-paintings.

For the Lhasa Old City conservation and rehabilitation project launched by Tibet Heritage Fund (THF) in 1996, Rme ru rnying pa had a special significance: it was the living heart of a small community living in the shadow of the golden roofs (*rgya phib*) of the Lha sa Gtsug lag khang. THF’s aim was to rehabilitate an entire neighbourhood of historic buildings rather than creating a single museum building, and after restoration of the adjacent Star sdong shag and Rong brag houses was completed in 1998, Rme ru rnying pa was next on the list. In the same year, in accordance with the cooperation agreement with THF, Rme ru rnying pa was listed by the Lhasa City Cultural Relics Office as protected site no. 16 in the Bar skor area, and a detailed site survey began.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Rme ru rnying pa lies at the centre of the Bar skor neighbourhood of Lhasa, at the junction of two alleyways leading from the eastern gate of the Lha sa Gtsug lag khang, known as Se ra stag sgo, to the northern and eastern sections of Bar skor Street.

The complex, measuring 40 by 46 meters, is preserved in its entirety [see figures at the end of this article]. Two gates on the north side provide the main access, allowing worshippers to perform the traditional clockwise circumambulation of the main temple. Both gate frames are original, and so is the two-panelled door of the east gate, with its silver-inlay ironwork. Both gates were re-painted in 1999 using mineral colours. The east gate leads, past the former kitchen, directly into the courtyard, but has remained closed for decades for reasons best known to the authorities. An alley leads from the west gate into the courtyard along the gallery lined with prayer-wheel in front of the chapel now commonly known as Dzam bha la lha khang. This chapel has a long affiliation with Rme ru grva tshang, a larger monastery located to the north of the Bar skor area, which provides two caretaker monks. The epithet ‘Rnying pa’ (the old one) has evidently been added at some stage to distinguish these two.

The Dzam bha la chapel is considered the original 9th century Rme ru temple preserved *in situ*. It contains a pillar-less, rectangular sanctum with a roofed, narrow ambulatory passage, with the entrance facing east [see plate 2 for a view of the interior]. It has the shape of an inverted ‘T’, with two niches at the entrance apparently designed for the placement of door guardians. We find a number of early temples, mostly associated with the imperial period, built to similar plan and proportions. The building plan of ‘old’ Rme ru particularly resembles that of Btsan thang g.yu’i lha khang in Yar lung, founded by Srong btsan sgam po as affiliated temple (’*chongs* or ’*chong*) of the Khra ’brug *vihara*.

The Khams gsum zangs khang gling located outside the boundary walls of Bsam yas, credited to one of Khri srong lde btsan’s wives, belongs to the same typology.

The plan to which all three were built corresponds to an Indian prototype, modestly-sized shrines surrounded by ambulatory built especially in the later Gupta and Calukya periods for which no typological name has been cast yet, sharing the distinct door protector niches, so we may tentatively refer to them as the ‘rotated T’ type.

The iconography in Rme ru, as far as we know, is still original even if the actual images are not: on the west-facing altar a central Sakyamuni image is placed, flanked by eight *boddhisattva*s, and so corresponds to the iconography of other imperial period chapels, i.e. the principal chapels of the Lha sa Gtsug lag khang, the Ra mo che and the Ke ru lha khang. The door niches are occupied by images of Dzam bha la (Jambhala) (south niche) and by Rnam thos sras (Vaisravana) (north niche), acting as door guardians (*lokapala*s). Both can be seen as forms of the Indian deity Kubera, formerly belonging to the *yaksha* class of semi-demons. We do not know if this placement is original. Dzam bha la/Jambhala also acts as a 'doubled' door guardian in the Lha sa Gtsug lag khang's Gtsang khang lho ma. In Indian chapels, when acting as door guardian, Jambhala can be found paired with a consort (Vasudhara or Tara) rather than with a related deity representing a different aspect of the root deity Kubera.

The ground floor stonewalls could well be the original walls. There have been no mural paintings in living memory, and investigations of different layers of mud surfaces revealed no traces of paintings either. There are no pillars, and so no dateable timber elements. The ceiling construction is comparatively recent, dating back no earlier than the 19th century extension (when the upper-storey chapel acquired its present form). The floor is a new layer of *ar ka* laid in 1999. The floor level in this chapel is considerably lower than the ground outside, indicating how much the soil layer has risen over the last millennium.

This chapel abuts the Lha sa Gtsug lag khang temple's eastern kitchen room (*rung khang*) with its huge hearth and tea cauldrons, presently unused. The shape of the kitchen makes it clear that the Dzam bha la lha khang marked the eastern limit of the well-documented structural extension of the Gtsug lag khang in the 17th–18th centuries.

The boulder said to have been recognized as an auspicious object by king Srong btsan sgam po is located in an inaccessible room to the north of the Dzam bha la chapel. During the 1999 conservation work, this room was found to be solid, the spaces around the boulder having apparently been filled with stone. It was determined to be structurally in sound condition, and so the room was left undisturbed. Its mere existence, as well as its position in close proximity to the Lha sa gtsug lag khang's 7th century core, are locally pointed out as proof for the authenticity of the founding legend.

A stone staircase gives access to the six-pillar Bram ze mgon khang on the upper storey.

This is an unusual place, both for its concept and form. Managed by monks ordained in the Sa skya pa tradition deputed from Gong dkar chos sde monastery, this protector chapel fills the area above both Dzam bha la chapel and the inaccessible room, creating a space of 13 pillars divided by a mud-brick wall without any apparent classical prototype as precedent. The roof above is undecorated and flat. This arrangement can be better understood in the context of a transformation, during which another structure superseded the original Rme ru chapel as principal building in an enlarged complex. The Bram ze chapel has been designed to fit into the courtyard structure. According to the oral tradition, it may be contemporary with the 19th century assembly hall, but there is no textual evidence.

Inside, the space to the north of the division wall makes up the main chapel. This is further divided between the area containing altars and images, located directly above the room with the boulder, and an assembly area occupied by the monk-caretakers, located above part of the Dzam bha la chapel. The floor of the shrine area is lower than that of the assembly area and of the gallery outside, and consisted of a very rough *ar ka* coat mixed with gravel. A smaller room in the back has traces of murals and served as additional chapel before 1959 but is presently little used. The Bram ze mgon khang was initially restored by Gong dkar Chos sde monastery in the late 1980s. The two main images enshrined here, representing Mgon po zhal bram gzugs can (north wall) and its companion Mgon po gur (west wall), were made during the 1980s restoration in replacement of those destroyed 20 years earlier.

On the interior walls there are remnants of pre-1959 mural paintings that once covered the entire room. The images were painted in white, yellow and gold outlines on a black background. On the outside walls, fragments of old mural painting were revealed beneath a coat of paint applied after the chapel was closed down in the 1960s. These were traced and documented. The ceiling has a post-1980s skylight, and no elements of particular historic or artistic value.

The largest structure in the compound was built to accommodate a branch community of Gnas chung monastery, seat of the Tibetan State Oracle. Consecrated in mid-1886, it is a typical example of a ’*du khang* (monastic assembly hall) building built during the Dga’ ldan pho brang era. The walls are built in solid stone, three stories high, white-washed

on three sides and adorned with red *span bad* bands [see fig. 6 showing the west elevation]. The south facade is perfectly symmetrical. The impressive northern elevation, built from large rough-cut boulders to a steep batter, and painted deep red, is reminiscent of the Po ta la's Pho brang dmar po. We can identify the central vertical section of this building as Pe har lcog. In Lhasa's old city, there are a number of comparable *lcog* structures constituting an architectural type that can be defined as a red towering structure housing a protector deity of particular significance to the mother monastery. Another very important example is the Tse'u dmar lcog of Lhasa's Bstan rgyas gling monastery, modelled on the Bsam yas pe har lcog.

Seven stone steps lead to the porch, consisting of four old multi-cornered pillars and housing two large prayer-wheels. The porch is partially open but usually hung with Tibetan-style light cotton curtains (in the past, heavy curtains woven from yak hair had been used). The portico is decorated with the standard monastic portico motifs—the *rgyal chen sde bzhi*, the wheel of life and a mostly illegible inventory of the monastery's history and important donors painted in cursive script on yellow ground. On either side of the porch are two smaller rooms, used mainly as storage space for the preparation of ceremonies.

A two-panelled door leads directly into the large 16-pillar assembly hall, built on a raised platform, typical for the late construction date. At the back there is a four-pillar elevated sanctum. In the centre of the assembly hall four raised pillars (*byar ka*) carry the skylight (*mthongs*). Two large prayer-wheels are placed in the two outer corners. A long room on the eastern side serves to store ritual instruments and material donations; it is considered unfit to serve as either chapel or sitting room because two toilet vaults run through it.

In clockwise direction starting from the entrance, the murals show the following protective deities as main images: Gnyan chen thang lha and Lha mo nyi ma gzhon nu on the south wall west of the entrance; Nub phyogs gsung gi rgyal po, Lho phyogs yon tan rgyal po, Rdo rje grags ldan and 'Phrin las rgyal po on the west wall; Rta mgrin, Rtags brgyad bum gzugs and 'Jigs byed lha bcu gsum on the north wall; Chos rgyal, Dpal ldan lha mo, Dbus phyogs thugs kyi rgyal po, Shar phyogs sku'i rgyal po and Brtan ma bcu gnyis on the east wall; and Dur khrod bdag po on the south wall east of the entrance [see plate 5].

The images are painted on a black background and framed between a top frieze depicting flayed skins of humans and animals, and a bot-

tom frieze showing skeletal beings drowning in an ocean of blood. These murals are original, and show similarity in subject and style to the famed mural paintings of the mother monastery Gnas chung. They survived the 1960s in reasonable condition, and in the mid-1990s, thanks to a private donation, they were re-traced and varnished by Lhasa-based artists.

The wooden pillars (*ka ba*), brackets (*gzhu*) and beams (*rdung ma*) are decorated in typical Dga' ldan pho brang era fashion. The lower beams are painted with the golden dragon and lotus flower motif (*gser 'brug pad ris*). On the brackets are paintings of *'dzi par* holding jewels, made with gold leaf (*gser shog*). The four raised pillars have carved medallions harbouring relics on the south-facing side of their brackets, and the upper beams holding the skylight are decorated with the 'Chinese bamboo' design (*smyug ris*). The ceiling is done in the refined *steng sgrigs* style, consisting of individually-shaped joists.

Long rows of cushions decked with runner carpets serve to seat the monastic assembly, with a raised throne-type seat for the abbot (or senior teacher) at the head, in front of a small altar. The sanctum is reached by four wooden steps at the back of the hall, with images of the two great protectors of the Tibetan state on either side. These represent Dpal ldan lha mo and Gnas chung rdo rje grags ldan, much propitiated by local worshippers with offerings of locally-brewed barley beer and imported spirits. The main image in the sanctum portrays a seated Guru Padmasambhava in semi-wrathful form (Snang srid zil gnon) flanked by smaller statues of the main protective deities of the Gnas chung tradition (Pe har sku lnga, Nyi ma gzhon nu) and the monastery's collection of religious books in glazed cabinets. In the centre of the room there is a throne for the Dalai Lama, decorated at opportune moments with a huge portrait of the banned spiritual leader. A door to the east reveals a wooden staircase that leads to the upper level.

A trap-door opens inside a narrow corridor connecting three quite separate rooms. This upper-most floor was reserved for the Gnas chung chos skyong and the Dalai Lama. The main room once contained gilded thrones for the reception of visitors during the *lo gsar* [New Year] festivities (lost since 1959). A smaller room contained a kitchen to prepare tea for the dignitaries. In the back there is a composting-type toilet with a three-storey drop. In concordance with the exclusive nature of these rooms and the preference of vertical hierarchy in Tibetan architecture, the decorations found here on the upper floor were especially

fine. In the 1960s, the insides were completely covered with thick greenish paint and converted into public housing. Even the carved decorations on the two wooden pillars were partially scraped off and painted over. During the subsequent restoration, the coat of green was successfully removed by Tibetan painters working with a German restorer, to reveal among others well-preserved images of Sakyamuni, Padmasambhava and Rje Tsong kha pa. In the course of the 1999 conservation project, this space was turned into a chapel dedicated to Gnas chung rdo rje grags ldan.

A door leads to the roof and an outdoor staircase. The flat roof is bordered by a tall parapet. A two-band ornamental *span bad* frieze runs around the parapet and the upper part of the top floor level [see plate 4 showing the composition and restoration of this band]. The unusual double width signifies the prestige of the Gnas chung oracle. The deployment of a row of nine Chinese-style *dou gong* brackets is unusual here. In Tibet, these brackets are commonly used for construction of the Chinese-style canopy roof (*rgya phib*). Their deployment on the north wall here serves no structural purpose, but suggests that Rme ru enjoys the same prestige as buildings such as the Po ta la's Pho brang dmar po and to Ra mo che. Gilded medallions (*me long*) that once adorned the frieze have been removed during the 1960s, but new medallions were hammered out of copper, gilded in Lhasa and reinstated for the 1999 conservation project. Six new *thug* banners made of black yak hair and four banners of victory (*rgyal mtshan*) are raised at the corners of the two roof levels. The highest point of the monastery is a gilded *ga dznyi ra* spire cast and erected in late 1999, replacing the lost original.

The outer staircase leads down to the middle (second) floor level. During the first site visits in 1989, we found that many upper floor rooms were still functioning as residential apartments, inhabited by lay families living in uneasy cohabitation with ordained monks. By the time the detailed investigation began in late 1998, more rooms inside the assembly hall building had been returned to the monastery. On the middle floor are the kitchen and residential rooms for the senior monks, including a large south-facing sitting room (*rab gsal*) with balcony, for the use of the Gnas chung abbot. The sitting room has preserved original pillars and beams decorated similarly to the assembly hall. No original murals could be recovered here except for decorations around the entrance area, as the old plaster had been completely removed before

1985. On the room’s western wall, a mural showing the court of the ‘Great Fifth’ Dalai Lama based on a similar one at Gnas chung was commissioned by the project and painted by Lhasa-based painters in 1999 using mineral colours. Because of his personal involvement in the creation of the institution of the Tibetan State Oracle, the Rme ru rnying pa monastic community regard the Fifth Dalai Lama as its most important past benefactor and credit him with the initial extension from small chapel to *grva tshang* compound. However, no clear information about construction at Rme ru rnying pa during the Fifth’s time has been identified to date.

One former toilet on this floor was converted into a solar shower in 1999. A staircase leads back down from there to the entrance porch, completing the worshipper's tour of the building.

The south and east wings of the courtyard are in use as residential apartments managed by Lhasa’s municipal housing authority. The formerly open ground-floor galleries were converted from stables into flats in the early 1980s. They have stone floors, simple, rounded pillars and modern doors and windows. A four-pillar room on the east side of the courtyard was originally used to store and prepare the tea and foodstuffs consumed during monastic assemblies.

The pillars of the ground floor galleries were particularly affected by rot and subsequent settlement, and the entire gallery had to be mechanically lifted up to restore the original level.

The upper storey is accessed via three stone staircases leading to open galleries along each wing. All the rooms beyond the Bram ze mgon khang chapel area were formerly occupied by the Rme ru rnying pa monks, and have *ar ka* floors and painted (but otherwise undecorated) wooden pillars and beams similar to those in the residential rooms of the main building. Some of these rooms have preserved elements of pre-1960s woodwork, such as doors and carved window frames. The galleries’ original wooden railing (*khra skyor*) was only partly extant and was restored in 1999. The lay tenants had extended their apartments by claiming space on the galleries and roof, but the extensions were removed. The most interesting apartment is located at the north-eastern end, a two-pillar room with a traditional wooden entrance screen. Here are preserved carved pillar capitals, an old carved window frame and traces of pre-1960s mural painting. The antechamber also leads via an old decorated doorway to the adjacent building simply known as Sgo ra

shar, whose stables, residential and storage rooms were formerly used by Rme ru rnying pa.

There are two toilets on the upper floor at the southern end of the eastern and western galleries.

After the installation of drainage and sewage facilities, the courtyard was re-paved with stone in 1999, restoring it to its former condition. There is now a tapstand on the site of the original well, and an incense burner stands in the centre of the courtyard.

As a result of the 1999 conservation project, the original timber and stone structures have been restored and a significant amount of 19^{th} century art and architectural details have been preserved. Historic paintings on walls and timber frame elements have been uncovered, cleaned and stabilized. A new *ar ka* roof and new drainage have given the building a new lease.

The Tibetan traditional soil and timber architecture requires modest but constant upkeep and vigil, a single missing piece of slate on the parapet can turn into a major roof leak after a couple of years of water infiltration. The end of THF's Lhasa Old City Rehabilitation Program in 2000 also spelt an abrupt end to the community-based maintenance program that we had tried to organize. Important follow-up works on Rme ru rnying pa in the following year did not happen.

These events have compromised the sustainability of the work done. Lhasa's historic city centre can only be successfully preserved on the basis of enduring commitment by residents and the responsible government departments.

CONCLUSION

Rme ru rnying pa in its present form presents a late addition to the densely built-up inner Bar skor area. Its lay-out is an interesting variation of the Lhasa *grva tshang* design of the 18^{th}–19^{th} centuries, as represented by the monasteries of Bzhi sde, Bstan rgyas gling, Tshe smon gling and post-1864 Rme ru grva tshang. Owing to lack of available building space, the complex is physically connected to adjacent older buildings, such as the service buildings of the Gtsug lag khang and Star sdong shag house (one of whose ground-floor apartments can only be accessed from this courtyard). It is also connected with the adjacent

Sgo ra shar house, a contemporary and former service building of Rme ru rnying pa.

As discussed above, the form of the original Rme ru chapel corresponds to imperial period temple foundations and their Indian prototypes. Its placement in relation to the older Gtsug lag khang (erected in close proximity but facing in the opposite direction) is based on geomantic preferences of the late imperial period about which we still know very little. The way the 17th century extension of the Gtsug lag khang temple accommodates the Dzam bha la chapel building confirms local belief in its authenticity. The 19th century Rme ru rnying pa enlargement, carried out on behalf of the powerful Gnas chung oracle, also appears as confirmation of such belief, because an established architectural formula was modified in order to incorporate the older chapel [see fig. 5 at the end of this article].

On the basis of the evidence gathered, I accept the identification of the 8th century Rme ru lha khang with the Dzam bha la chapel at Rme ru rnying pa, one of only a handful of surviving structures from the imperial period. This chapel was respected and accommodated during later construction projects, and so represents an important example of the Tibetan tradition of preservation of historically important monuments.

Thanks to Matthew Akester (Kathmandu) and the editor, Professor Erberto Lo Bue (Bologna) for having made important contributions to the text.

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

*1. Courtyard, south elevation of *'du khang* (A. Alexander 2000)
*2. Dzam bha la chapel, southern part of sanctum (J. Mueller 2003)
3. Ma ni dung phyur 2000 (A. Alexander)
4. Restoration of *span bad* frieze, using the traditional techniques and materials (A. Alexander 1999)
5. Below: *dur khrod bdag po*, 19th-century mural, mineral colours on mud plaster; *'du khang* building, south wall, east of entrance gate, re-traced and varnished during earlier private restoration in 1995 (J. Mueller 2003)

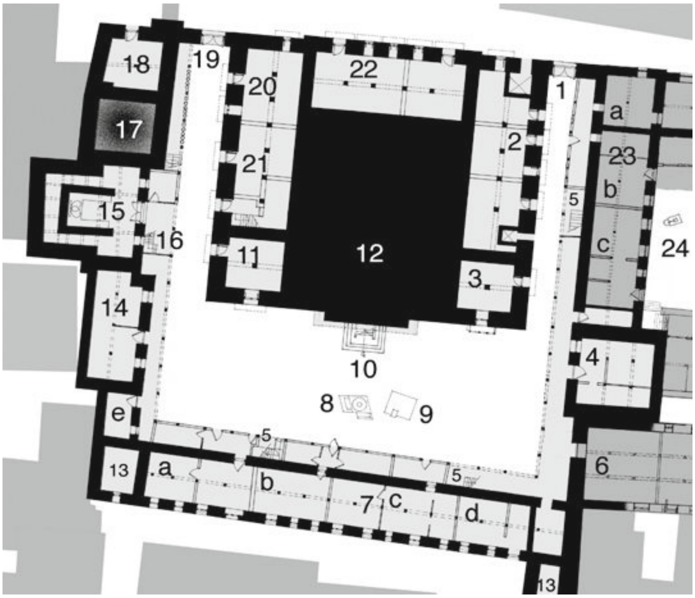


Fig. 1: Ground level (all plans by THF 1998–2003)

1. east gate
2. three former storerooms, now under housing dept.
3. former store-room, now public housing
4. former tea and food room for assembly, now housing
5. stairs to upper floor
6. flat inside Star sdong shag
7. five former stable- and storerooms now housing
8. incense burner
9. tapstand
10. stone steps to hall
11. room (to Gnas chung)
12. raised stone platform-foundation for assembly hall
13. toilet vaults
14. former store room, now public housing
15. Dzam bha la chapel
16. stairs to roof
17. walled-in boulder blessed by Srong btsan sgam po
18. store-room owned by Lha sa Gtsug lag khang
19. west gate

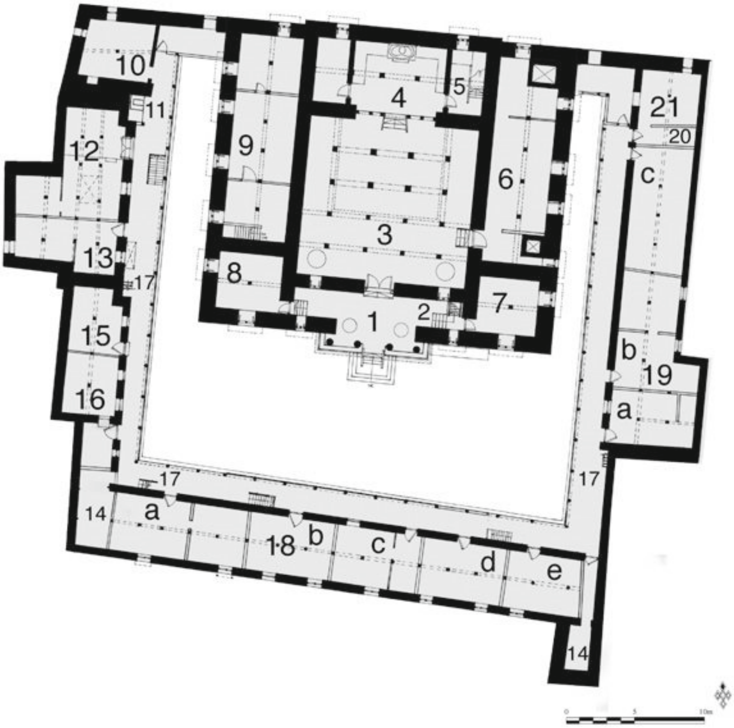


Fig. 2: Second level plan (THF)

1. portico
2. stairs
3. assembly hall
4. sanctum
5. stairs leading to upper floor
6. monastic store-room
7. monastic residential room
8. monastic store-room
9. residential flat, disputed ownership
10. residential room
11. incense burner
12. Bram ze mgon khang (under Gong dkar chos de)
13. residential room
14. toilets (with ante-chamber)
15. former monastic residential room now public flat
16. former monastic residential room now public flat
17. open gallery
18. former monks' rooms now public flats
19. former monks' rooms now public flats
20. corridor leading to Sgo ra shar House
21. former monks' now public flat with extant historic decorations

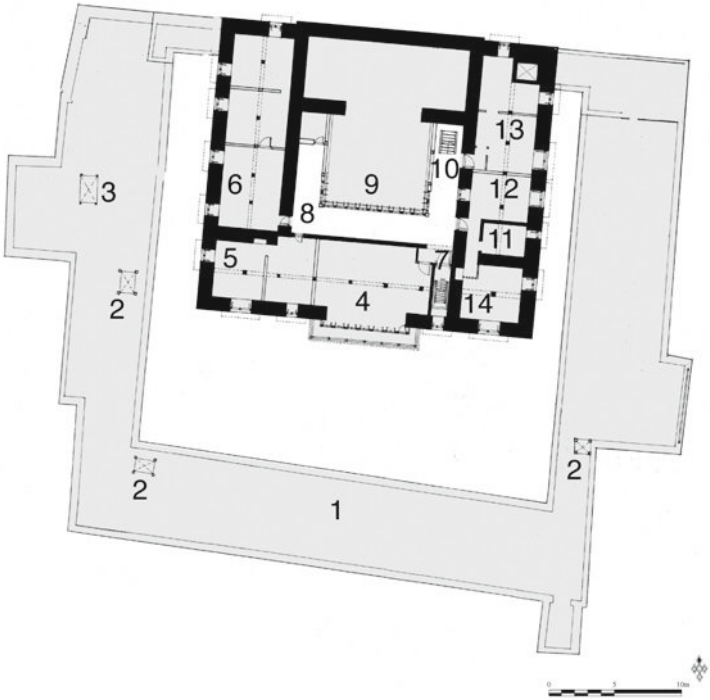


Fig. 3: Third level plan (THF)

1. roof
2. stairway shelters
3. skylight for Bram ze mgon khang
4. rab gsal sitting room
5. monastic sitting room
6. monastic residential rooms, formerly connected with trap-door to floor below
7. monastic residential room
8. open gallery
9. skylight over assembly hall
10. stairs to roof chapel
11. toilet converted into solar shower
12. tea kitchen for Gnas chung monks
13. residential room owned by public housing department
14. residential room of Rme ru rnying pa abbot

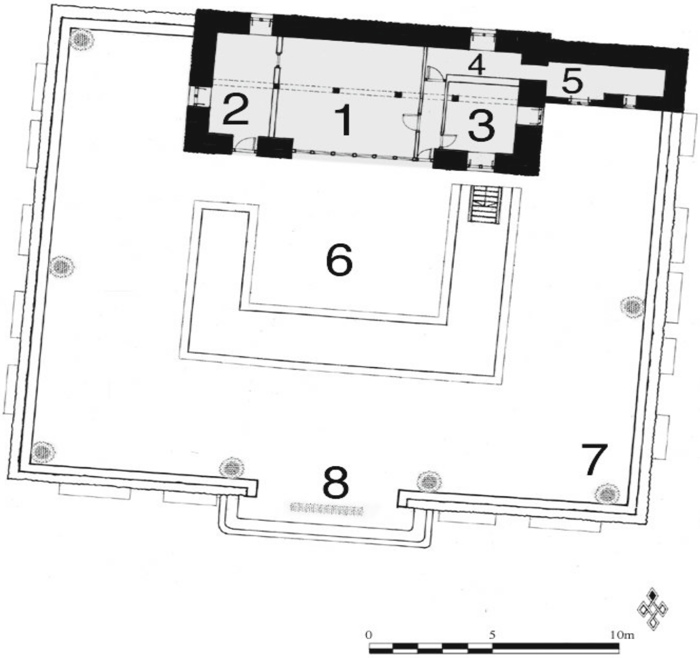


Fig. 4: Fourth level plan (THF)

1. former reception room reserved for Gnas chung Oracle now used as chapel for Gnas chung rdo rje grags ldan
2. former reception room reserved for Ta la'i bla ma now closed
3. former tea kitchen exclusively to serve tea to the Ta la'i bla ma and to the Gnas chung Oracle
4. corridor connected via trapdoor and stairs to room below
5. toilet formerly exclusively reserved for use by the Ta la'i bla ma and the Gnas chung Oracle
6. roof
7. banners
8. metal image of two deer flanking the wheel of Dharma, symbolizing Buddha's first occasion for teaching

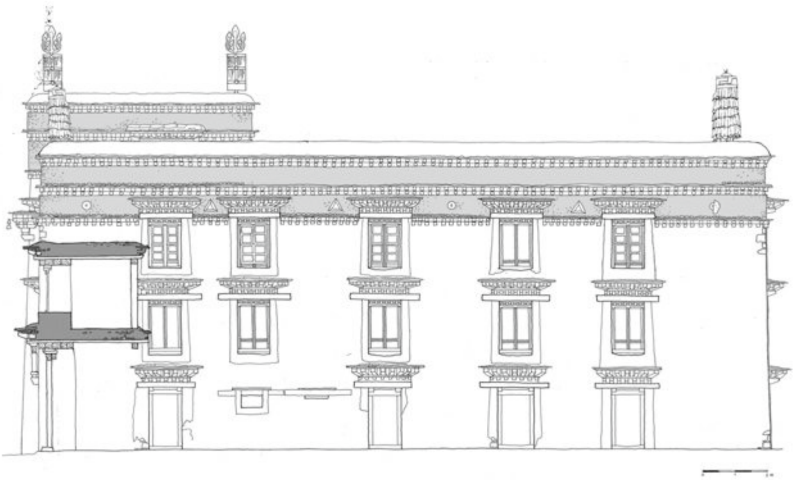


Fig. 5: West elevation, THF/ J. Hartmann, Z. Thiessen (1999)

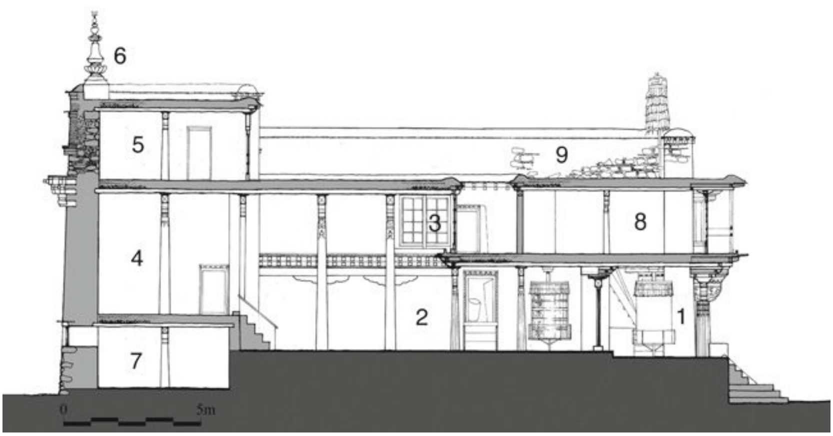


Fig. 6: Section, THF/ C. Tsui (1998)

1. portico
2. assembly hall
3. skylight
4. sanctum
5. oracle's reception room
6. spire
7. store room
8. rab gsal sitting room
9. roof with parapet



Fig. 7: Rme ru building history (André Alexander)

ON THE ICONOGRAPHY OF TIBETAN SCROLL PAINTINGS (*THANG KA*) DEDICATED TO THE FIVE TATHĀGATAS

Christian Luczanits[1]

Some years ago, I discovered that, besides the well-known representations of different variants of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala throughout early Tibetan monuments, and in particular in the monuments of the western Himalayas, there are also a number of Central Tibetan scroll paintings or *thang ka* closely related to the Vajradhātumaṇḍala. These paintings are part of a series of at least five, where each is dedicated either to the centre or a quarter of the mandala. As the main deities on these paintings are the five Tathāgatas or Jinas of the five Buddha families, the relevant *thang ka* have generally not been identified precisely and differentiated from other depictions of the five Jinas.[2]

As I have briefly noted in the case of the first example of such a painting that I discovered and published in a review article (Luczanits 2001: 137–38), when seeing a *thang ka* dedicated to one of the Jinas, one has to differentiate between those paintings that depict the five Tathāgatas with the secondary Bodhisattvas displayed symmetrically and with only the standing Bodhisattvas individualized, and those where all secondary Bodhisattvas clearly convey an iconographic meaning by being individualized. While *thang ka* of the former type may be described as 'Five Jina *Thang ka*', those of the second type have to be identified by the more general subject depicted.

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[1] This contribution is complemented by Eva Allinger's study on stylistic aspects of the same group of paintings. We are grateful to the collectors that allowed their objects to be studied in detail and provided photographs for publication. Similarly, the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco provided photographs of their important *thang ka* series. Further, I would like to express my gratitude to The Metropolitan Museum of Art for the six months fellowship I enjoyed there—enabling me to study the Amoghasiddhi *thang ka* there in greater detail—and to Steve Kossak. Otherwise, most of the research on which this article is based has been done during a three-year research grant of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (APART).

[2] Correct identifications have been suggested by Jeff Watt (for at least one relevant *thang ka* on www.himalayanart.org) and in the case of one *thang ka* in the recent exhibition The Circle of Bliss (Huntington 2003: no. 16). However, in both cases the organization of the *thang ka* iconographic program has not been fully understood.

For reasons of space, it is not possible in this article to present all the different types of such paintings and their underlying concepts.[3] Instead, I will explain the way the *thang ka* featuring the deities of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala differ from other representations of the five Jinas and how they are organized and to be read. By discussing examples of different types and variations of depictions and pointing out distinctive elements I will enable the reader to distinguish Vajradhātu based *thang ka* from other Five Jina representations.

Regardless to which of the above-mentioned types a *thang ka* is to be attributed to, it is important to bear in mind that such paintings were never intended as isolated objects, but were originally conceived as parts of a series. This, of course, appears obvious when a *thang ka* represents one of the five Jinas, but the Jinas are not the only iconographic element that can be read across the series. Indeed, as the first example in this article tries to demonstrate, such reading is an important aspect for understanding the object and its purpose. Also the individual painting can only be fully understood if this fact is taken under consideration.

FIVE JINA *THANG KA*

Examples for the first type, those paintings where the Bodhisattvas surrounding the individual Jinas are generic representations and are thus not identifiable as individual deities, are relatively frequent and it is sufficient to consider those that have been included in the exhibition *Sacred Visions*. Quite a few *thang ka* in its catalogue are dedicated to the five Jinas (Kossak and Singer 1998: nos 1, 4, 13, 23a–c, 25, 28, 36a–c) and of these all but one are to be considered variants of this type.

Exemplarily, I focus on the first of the two series of three paintings published under catalogue number 23. The three paintings are: a Ratnasaṃbhava of the Pritzker Collection (Kossak and Singer 1998: 23a); an Amitābha of another private collection (Kossak and Singer 1998: 23b); and an Amoghasiddhi of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

[3] A comprehensive comparison and study of the typology of all such *thang ka* known to me and their relationship to full mandala representations is being currently prepared by me.

(plate 6; Kossak and Singer 1998: 23c). In this series, the figures flanking the Jinas in the upper part of the painting are identical on all three paintings. To the sides of the Jinas stand the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, each of them not only recognizable by his characteristic attribute and colour, but also identified by a caption.[4] In contrast, the other 8 seated Bodhisattvas depicted in the upper part of the paintings are represented completely symmetrical, with their colours and gestures mirroring each other.[5]

As Steve Kossak has noted, in the case of this series of *thang ka* the groups of deities depicted in the lower row are quite unusual and the iconographic concept the depiction follows is not yet fully understood. All these deities are identified by captions, but the transcriptions of these have not been published with the paintings. I shall therefore try to fill this gap on the basis of the publication for the first two *thang ka* and of observation for that in The Metropolitan Museum.[6]

Ratnasaṃbhava is associated exclusively with deities of wealth (from left to right): Vaiśravaṇa/ Rnam thos sras,[7] Aparājitā,[8] Jambhala,[9] the elephant-headed, four-armed Gaṇapati (Ganeśa)/ Tshogs bdag,[10] Black Jambhala,[11] and a goddess holding a jewel and a twig.[12] The name of this Jina, literally 'Of Jewel Origin', and his jewel family are associated with wealth and accordingly wealth deities, a cross section of which is represented here, appear with him.[13]

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[4]On the Metropolitan Museum of Art painting only the Maitreya image is identified by a caption: *byams pa*.

[5] These are not the usual group of Eight Bodhisattvas of the Fortunate Aeon (*bhadrakalpa*) of which the two standing ones are usually part of (making them 10 here). They are generic types mirroring each other in gesture, colour and attributes, a red and a white lotus.

[6] The study of this *thang ka* is a by-product of my fellowship research at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[7] The caption possibly reads: *rnaṃ sras*.

[8] Aparajīta is a *yakṣa* and his iconography here—white, holding an *aṅkuśa* and a vase—appears to be the common one (cf. Chandra 1986: 837). The name, meaning 'unsurpassed', is also used as an epithet for Śiva and Viṣṇu. The caption possibly reads: *a pa ra ci ta*.

[9] The caption possibly reads: *'dzaṃ bha lha*.

[10] The caption possibly reads: *tshogs bdag*.

[11] The caption appears not to be preserved.

[12] Possibly this is a form of Vasudhārā / Nor rgyun ma, the goddess of imperishable riches (cf. Chandra 1986: 832). This reading appears also to conform to the caption.

[13] The association of Ratnasaṃbhava with deities of wealth appears to go back ultimately to concepts as expressed in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* (*STTS*), where

In the case of Amitābha deities belonging to his family, the lotus family, dominate the bottom row. The only puzzling issue is the occurrence of Mañjuśrī, who is not commonly associated with this Buddha or his family, at the beginning of the row.[14] Mañjuśrī is followed by the triad of Ṣaḍakṣaralokeśvara flanked by Maṇidhara and Ṣaḍakṣarī-Mahāvidyā, and representations of Avalokiteśvara and Green Tārā.

Turning to Amoghasiddhi, it has been said that the deities in the bottom row show five forms of the goddess Tārā (Kossak and Singer 1998: 108). However, these goddesses are to be identified as depictions of the Five Protectresses (Pañcarakṣā), personifications of magic formulae (*dhāraṇī*) used for protective purposes. As their rendering is very detailed, it may be useful to provide their full description here (from left to right):[15]

The first goddess, Mahāsahasra(pramardanī)/ Stong chen ma,[16] is white, one-headed, six-armed and her hands hold/perform (in pairs, right before left): sword and noose, bow and arrow, *varadamudrā* and axe.[17]

Mahāmāyūrī/ Rma bya chen mo,[18] the Great Peacock protectress that cures snakebites,[19] is shown green, three-headed—the side faces being yellow and red (read clockwise around the main head)—and six-armed. The main pair of hands is held in front of the breast, but both attributes are lost; the right performs a *vitarkamudrā*-like gesture while the left is

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rituals to this family (oddly mingled with the *karma* family of Amoghasiddhi) are exclusively concerned with gaining wealth and good fortune (cf. Snellgrove 1981). Would the direction guide their placement, they would rather be found on the bottom of the Amoghasiddhi *thang ka*, as at least some of them are supposed to house in the North, with Vaiśravaṇa being the king of the North and Kubera the *dikpāla* of that direction.

[14] We may well see here a reflection of the inclusion of a form of Mañjuśrī, Vajratīkṣṇa, in the Padma family of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala. Vajratīkṣṇa, too, holds sword and book, but he is commonly represented blue.

[15] The iconography of the goddesses on this *thang ka* have been compared with those found in Chandra (1986: nos 206–10, 2378–82). There the group is represented twice, both not comparing very well with the depiction on the *thang ka*. Closer to the representations are the descriptions of these goddesses as they are summarized in de Mallmann (1986: 289–95) and deriving from the *Sādhanamālā* (*SM*).

[16] I read the caption as (the underlined section barely legible): *stang chen ma*.

[17] Her iconography conforms to *SM* 198, where she is the tutelary deity.

[18] Caption: *rma? bya chen mo*.

[19] Mahāmāyūrī is surprisingly prominent at the Buddhist caves of Ellora (Malandra 1993) and appears to be one of the first esoteric goddesses that where worshipped on a grand scale (cf. the interesting study of Schmithausen 1997).

shown with the palm down underneath it.[20] The other pairs hold/perform bow and arrow, *varadamudrā* and flask.

Pratisarā / So sor ’brang ma,[21] protecting from sin and illness, is yellow, four-faced—the side faces being red, green and white—and eight-armed. She holds sword and noose in the main arms in front of her body. The other hands hold arrow and bow, elephant-goad (*aṅkuśa*) and axe, a lost attribute (the hand is distorted)[22] and a stick with jewel.[23]

The fourth goddess is actually Śītavatī/ Bsil ba’i tshal,[24] as the captions for the last two goddesses have been mixed up. This becomes evident when one compares the iconography of the two deities with their descriptions in de Mallmann (1986: 292–93). Śītavatī, the goddess saving from animals, is red, four-armed and one-headed and has a semi-fierce facial expression. In the depiction, she holds/performs stick (that may have once been an *aṅkuśa*) and axe, *varadamudrā* and something wrapped in cloth, apparently a book. The axe in the main hand is a curious detail, even more so since the hand is painted with the palm open towards the viewer and not clutching the handle of the axe.[25]

The last goddess, Mantrānudhāriṇā[26] / Gsangs sngags rjes su ’dzin,[27] the goddess protecting from illness, is black blue and four-armed. She holds/performs wheel and axe, *varadamudrā* and noose.[28]

Leaving aside minor iconographic divergences, these forms of the goddesses best conform to the descriptions in the *Sādhanamāla* that are dedicated to each of the goddess alone independent of the group. One

[20] The right hand may well have once held a peacock feather, the identifying attribute of this goddess. The lower hand is exactly held in the same way as in the case of the following goddess, who holds a thinly painted noose. According the closest description (*SM* 197), however, she should hold a bulk of jewels here.

[21] The caption reads (# standing for illegible syllables, \ for a line break): *# # # ’brang \ ma*.

[22] This hand must have once held a wheel, the distinctive attribute of this goddess.

[23] Given that the wheel was represented once, the major difference of this form to those with the same number of heads and arms described in de Mallmann (1986: 290–91) are the *aṅkuśa* instead of a *vajra* and the stick, which is clearly not a trident.

[24] Caption for the next goddess: *gsil ba’i tshal*.

[25] With the exception of the axe, the depiction very closely follows *SM* 200, where the goddess would hold a rosary instead of the axe. *SM* 201 has an axe as attribute of this goddess, but the other attributes would in this case be a sword and a noose besides the *varadamudrā*. The depiction is therefore closest to *SM* 200 and the axe appears to be an error.

[26] de Mallmann (1986) uses the name Mahānusāriṇī for this goddess.

[27] The caption for the previous goddess reads: *gsang # gs \ rjes su ’dzin*.

[28] Here the wheel is the attribute not found in the closest descriptions (*SM* 199 or 201), where a *vajra* or sword is held instead.

may thus conclude that the five deities invoked here are rather seen as independent goddesses and not necessarily as a mandala configuration centred on Pratisarā, as is the case with other descriptions of these deities in the *Sādhanamāla*.[29]

In addition, the portrait of the *sādhaka*, the practitioner of the teaching represented in this series, is placed in the bottom right corner of this *thang ka*; he holds an incense burner and his ritual paraphernalia are displayed in front of him. His depiction in this position indicates that the Amoghasiddhi *thang ka* had the outer position on the right, when the five *thang ka* were displayed together in a row, a position that most likely also accounts for the display of the Pañcarakṣā on this particular scroll painting. Judging from the part of the series that is known so far, it may be said that here the bottom row of deities affords the elevated Five Jina subject a more mundane touch emphasising daily concerns.

This is by no means the only way *thang ka* of a series of five Buddhas can relate to each other, as is evident if one takes a look at the second series collected in *Sacred Visions* (Kossak and Singer 1998: 36a–c). However, for the present purpose the example presented here is certainly sufficient to turn to the actual focus, an altogether other way of depicting the five Buddhas.

VAJRADHĀTUMAṆḌALA-RELATED *THANG KA*

The principal composition of a small Amoghasiddhi *thang ka* in a private collection (colour plate 7) compares well to that of the Metropolitan Museum Amoghasiddhi. However, the deities surrounding the central figure are mostly individualized and thus convey an iconographic meaning. As an iconographic analysis reveals, these are deities that occupy a section of a Vajradhātumaṇḍala.[30]

The four Bodhisattvas kneeling to the sides of Amoghasiddhi's throne back are to be read clockwise from the bottom left deity onwards. I am shortly describing the deities on the *thang ka* (in part paraphrasing their description by Ānandagarbha): Vajrakarma / Rdo rje

[29] Protection is also the function of the northern Bodhisattvas of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala.

[30] The iconographic details of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala deities are taken from the standard description in Ānandagarbha's commentary to the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgrahatantra* (*STTS*).

las is of variegated colours,[31] holds a *viśvavajra* in the right hand and a *viśvavajra*-bell in the left. Above him, Vajrarakṣa/ Rdo rje srung ba is golden and holds a *vajra*-armour, actually a string with a tiny piece of armour attached to its centre, with both hands 'as if dressing all Tathāgatas'. On the other side of Amoghasiddhi, Vajrayakṣa/ Rdo rje gnod sbyin, of black colour, is depicted semi-wrathful and holds teeth in his hands, actually his fangs.[32] Below him, Vajrasandhi/ Rdo rje khu tshur, of golden colour, holds *vajra* and bell.[33]

The row of Bodhisattvas flanking Amoghasiddhi's head is to be read from left to right. It begins with Vajragarbha/ Rdo rje sñing po, blue and holding a *vajra* on a lotus. Next to him, the yellow Akṣayamati/ Blo gros mi zad pa holds a lotus with a vase on top. A 'pile of jewels on a lotus' (*padma la gnas pa'i rin po che brtsegs pa*), in this case a flaming *triratna*, identifies the red Pratibhānakūṭa/ Spos pa brtsegs pa and 'an ear (*snye ma*) of jewels' the yellow Samantabhadra/ Kun tu bzang po next to him.

These are the northern Bodhisattvas of a Vajradhātumaṇḍala (colour plate 8). In a mandala depiction the first group of four Bodhisattvas immediately surrounds Amoghasiddhi occupying the northern square of the nine-field layout in the central palace. The Bodhisattvas thus are the northern group of the 16 *vajra*-Bodhisattvas, a group that is characteristic of the Vajradhātu—and related Yoga-Tantra mandalas. The second group of Bodhisattvas represents the northern deities in the second palace of the mandala. These are part of the 16 Bodhisattvas of the Fortunate Aeon (*bhadrakalpa*), a group that can be seen as extending the 8 Bodhisattva group that is so frequently depicted in late Indian and early Tibetan Buddhist monuments.

Once this organization principle is understood and continued with the other deities, it becomes clear that the position in front of Amoghasiddhi, between the Garuḍas of the throne, is occupied by the gate-keeper Vajrāveśa/ Rdo rje bebs pa. He is green and holds a *vajra*

[31] Vajrakarma has a white face, from below the face to the waist he is bright red, around the waist he is green and the upper arms and thighs are bright green, the lower arms and legs are bright yellow. The Bodhisattva shares the variegated colours with his attribute, the *viśvavajra*.

[32] Actually only in his right hand a tooth is recognizable.

[33] This depiction diverges substantially from the descriptions and other depictions of this Bodhisattva I know so far. He is supposed to press a *vajra* placed between (*nang du*) the two *samaya*-fists and in most cases the hands are close together in front of the body with or without the *vajra* actually depicted.

and a *vajra*-bell, the latter being his distinctive attribute. Indeed, the depiction of a deity in this position turned out to be a marker for Vajradhātu-related *thang ka*, regardless of their representing the Vajradhātumaṇḍala as such or different types of the root-mandala of the *Durgatipariśodhanatantra*, from those of the five Jinas.

To the sides of the throne-base are two standing goddesses. These, as the examples below will demonstrate more clearly, are supposed to be the offering goddess Nṛtyā/ Gar ma/ Dance and Gandhā/ Byug pa ma/ Perfume, but with the exception of the colour neither of them displays an iconography that allows for identifying them as such.[34]

Even some of the bottom row deities can be identified as part of the northern quarter of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala belonging to the outermost circle of protectors. In the lower left corner is Kubera/ Lus ngan (also Yakṣa/ Gnod sbyin), the guardian of the north, seated on a horse. He is yellow and holds a jewel or fruit and the mongoose.[35] Second from the right is Āśāna/ Dbang ldan, the guardian of the north-east. He has the colour of ashes, sits on a bull and holds a trident.[36] In the lower right corner is the yellow Vaiśravaṇa/ Rnam thos sras, the northern deity of the Four Great Kings, who holds an unusal object in his right (possibly a jewel on a lotus) and the mongoose.[37]

A row of Buddhas, here seven, performing the gesture of touching the earth, also appears on all other examples and thus may well be part of the standard iconography of the Vajradhātu-related *thang ka* despite the fact that a textual source in this regard has not (yet) been identified. The three central protectors presumably do not belong to the

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[34] Nṛtyā / Gar ma, of a diamond-like (*rdo rje las lta bu*) complexion, holds a three-pointed *vajra*, making dance-[gestures] with both arms, [she] abides [in this way]. Gandhā / Byug pa ma is of variegated colours like Gar ma and holds a sweet-smelling conch (*dri'i dung chos*) in the left hand; with the right hand [she] venerates the Tathāgatas with a cloud of fragrance.

[35] He is the head of the *yakṣa* / *gnod sbyin*, is commonly yellow or golden and a club is his standard attribute. Further, he is seated on a man, ghost or *yakṣa*, and only in Tibetan iconography also on a horse.

[36] Āśāna is the common denomination of Śiva as a *dikpāla*. He is white or 'of the colour of the ashes' (*bhasmavarṇa*), his hair dress or crown is ornamented with a crescent and he is mounted on a bull. He is usually four-armed, one hand holds a trident and another a skull-cup (cf. de Mallmann 1986: 243–44).

[37] Also Rnam thos kyi bu, king of the *yakṣa*, who is yellow or golden, is seated on a lion, holds a *dhvaja* or mace in right hand and a *nakula* left. "The wise one should draw him with a beautiful vase showering jewels" (Skorupski 1983). In the mandala he is said to hold a jewel club in the right and a bag made of mongoose skin with jewels in the left hand.

Vajradhātumaṇḍala configuration and also could not yet be identified. Only the central one carries attributes.[38]

The deities on this *thang ka* that could be identified best correspond to the representations of the root mandala of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgrahatantra* (*STTS*), commonly called Vajradhātumahāmaṇḍala, or the Vajradhātumaṇḍala described in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (*NSP* 19). These mandalas contain a core of 37 deities (5 Jinas, 16 *vajra*-Bodhisattvas, 8 offering goddesses and 4 gatekeepers) and an additional 16 Bodhisattvas of the Fortunate Aeon (*bhadrakalpa*) in a second square (colour plate 8). In the texts, the latter group receives considerably less attention, and in textual descriptions and paintings it occurs essentially in two variants: one where the colours and attributes differ for each deity (in all the *STTS* commentaries consulted so far and also in the *thang ka* just discussed); and one where their iconography in both body colour and attributes conforms to the principal *vajra*-Bodhisattva of their quarter (*NSP* 19).

The depiction on the Amoghasiddhi *thang ka* compares well to the representation of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala at Dungkar, to be attributed to c. 1200, that forms the basis for the drawing in colour plate 8). The composition at Dungkar only shows a single palace with the 16 Bodhisattvas of the Bhadrakalpa placed along its walls. Outside the mandala circle protective deities, among them the Guardians of the Directions (*dikpāla*) and the Planets, are placed against the blue background.

Other paintings on the topic show a more complex iconography and an increase of deities, particularly with the repeated representation of Buddhas around the central deity. A good example for this is an Akṣobhya and his eastern quarter of the mandala in a private collection that has recently been published (colour plate 9; Pal 2003: no. 134). In terms of composition the painting clearly has two parts, with a colourful interior panel composed in exactly the same way as on the previous examples and, at first glance, a completely uniform surrounding, in this case three rows of repeated images on each side.

The description of the central panel allows me to introduce the secondary deities of the eastern quarter. The Bodhisattvas attending

[38] The central deity is black, brandishes a sword with the right hand and holds a mongoose in the left. The god carries an animal skin around his neck and rides a horse having a human skin underneath the saddle. The way the flaming halo of this deity appears to evolve from underneath the horse is odd. In general it appears that the bottom edge of this *thang ka* was quite damaged.

Akṣobhya are headed by Vajrasattva/ Rdo rje sems dpa' depicted standing to his right. He is of white colour and holds *vajra* and bell in front of his body. Above him, Vajrarāja/ Rdo rje rgyal po, is of golden colour and holds a *vajra*-hook. Vajrarāga/ Rdo rje chags pa is red and holds arrow and bow.[39] Finally, the standing Vajrasādhu/ Rdo rje legs pa, is green (of emerald colour) and with both hands in a *vajra*-fist pleasures all Tathāgatas by offering the exclamation, "well done".[40]

The Bodhisattvas of the *bhadrakalpa* flanking the Jina's head are represented with the same iconography as the main *vajra*-Bodhisattva of the respective quarter or family, in this case Vajrasattva. Their alternating complexions, pink and white, can only be explained as artistic variation. The throne base is flanked by the two white offering goddesses of the south-east, Lāsyā/ Sgeg mo/ Attraction,[41] holding *vajra* and bell in a coquetting manner at her hips and Dhūpā/ Bdug pa ma/ Incense satiating the Tathāgatas with an incense burner.

Among the rows of Buddhas surrounding this central panel only the bottom row has further iconographic significance. Its centre is occupied by four wrathful deities which I have been unable to identify individually with certainty so far, since I have only found lists of their names but no descriptions.[42] These gate-keepers are flanked by six figures distinguished by a rattle stick and a begging bowl. Of these two triads, the central figures have an *uṣṇīṣa* while the outer ones have none. Thus, these are to be identified as two Pratyekabuddhas flanked by four Hearers (*śrāvaka*).

As in the previous example the corners of the bottom row are occupied by the appropriate Guardians of the Directions. In the bottom left corner Śakra/ Dbang po (that is Indra)—yellow, seated on an elephant

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39 Instead of holding bow and arrow passively, as in this painting, the Bodhisattva is more frequently depicted at the point of shooting the arrow.

40 The hands actually look almost as if performing the teaching gesture (*dharmacakramudrā*).

41 This is less a literal translation, but an attempt to render the playful amorous aspect of this goddess into English.

42 The protectors of the eastern gate are Jig rten gsum snang, right of him Bdud rtsi 'khyil ba; to the left, Dus kyi srin mo; and at the back Dus kyi lcags kyu ma. If we assume that the white, six-armed deity—holding a knife(?) and a *kapāla* in the main hands in front of the body, the other hands holding *vajra* and lotus, skull-club and another stick—is Jig rten gsum snang in the centre, than the green, two-armed protector brandishing a *viśvavajra* in the raised right hand is Bdud rtsi 'khyil ba, the blue, two armed deity holding a *vajra* in the raised right hand is Dus kyi srin mo, and Dus kyi lcags kyu ma is the white, two-armed, protector holding (as his name indicates) an *aṇkuśa*.

and holding a *vajra*—is followed by Dhṛtarāṣṭra/ Yul 'khor srung, who is white and holds an Indian lute (*viṇā*). Regarding Agni/ Me lha, the fire-god and guardian of the south-east, in the bottom right corner only his mount, the goat, is extant.

Without going into details on this point, it should be noted that this extended type of the mandala, including a number of *śrāvaka* and Pratyekabuddhas, represents not the Vajradhātumaṇḍala itself, but one type of the closely related root mandala of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*.

A *THANG KA* SERIES RELATED TO THE VAJRADHĀTUMAṆḌALA

The largest series of *thang ka* representing a Vajradhātu-related mandala known to me so far comprises of four paintings. Of these, the *thang ka* dedicated to Akṣobhya is in the Honolulu Academy of Arts, while those depicting the central Vairocana, Ratnasaṃbhava and Amoghasiddhi are in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Regarding the iconography of the central deities, the Akṣobhya painting only displays minor differences to the examples previously discussed which do not have to be considered individually here. As we have not discussed the deities of the southern quarter yet, I shall explain their iconography on the basis of the Ratnasaṃbhava *thang ka* (colour plate 10).

Again the *vajra*-Bodhisattvas surrounding the Jina are depicted clockwise beginning with the standing Vajraratna/ Rdo rje rin chen, who is yellow and holds a wish-fulfilling jewel. He is followed by the sun-coloured Vajrasūrya/ Rdo rje nyi ma, the heaven-coloured Vajradhvaja/ Rdo rje rgyal mtshan, the banner clearly recognizable, and the white Vajrabhāṣa/ Rdo rje bzhad pa.[43] The four *bhadrakalpa*-Bodhisattvas of this quarter placed to the side of the halo iconographically mirror the principal *vajra*-Bodhisattva. The seated Bodhisattvas are accompanied by four Hearers (*śrāvaka*) and two Pratyekabuddhas, who have become part of the central panel in this case. The *śrāvaka* are represented on the outside, while the two Pratyekabuddhas are just to the sides of the throne back, all of them displaying *dharmacakramudrā*

[43] Because the documentation available to me does only allow it for a part of the deities and for reasons of space, I refrain from more detailed iconographic descriptions in the case of this series.

in this case. The offering goddesses of the south-west are placed to the sides of the throne base, but the protector of the inner gate usually occupying the centre is not depicted in that position in this series. Instead a female form of this protector has been placed in the bottom row, to the sides of the outer protectors.[44]

In the Ratnasaṃbhava and Amoghasiddhi *thang ka*, the latter not being discussed in detail here, the bottom row of deities does not contain additional Buddhas.[45] In the centre of the row are the four gate-keepers of the outer gates and to the left of them the gate-keepers of the inner gate in female form. These are flanked by the *dikpāla* of the respective directions. The Great King guarding the direction is placed in one of the corners as are also donor and *sādhaka*, again indicating that these two *thang ka* where in the outer positions.

The remaining space in the bottom rows is occupied by deities that have no relationship to the main theme, but are interestingly reminiscent of the first series discussed in this article. Ratnasaṃbhava is again associated with deities of wealth; the selection of deities appears partly identical to the Five Jina *thang ka* series discussed above.[46] Amoghasiddhi is again associated with a protective theme, in this case the goddess Tārā rescuing from the eight dangers.[47]

Fortunately, the series also preserves the *thang ka* dedicated to Vairocana (colour plate 11), allowing for shortly introducing the composition of a centre *thang ka*. From the examples known to me so far the centre *thang ka* differ more severely than those of representing the quarters. In the case of the San Francisco painting, Vairocana is flanked by the Bodhisattvas Maitreya and possibly Mañjuśrī (plate 12). Below them are Lāsyā and Mālā, two offering goddesses that are repeated here as they already occur with Akṣobhya and Ratnasaṃbhava. These deities thus have to be considered as being additions to the mandala topic.

[44] The iconography could not be verified on the basis of the rather poor documentation available to me.

[45] The Honolulu Akṣobhya *thang ka* does not preserve its bottom row.

[46] As far as they can be recognized from the available documentation, the deities are: to the left, two two-armed elephant-headed deities (red and white) and a red protector; to the right, Yellow Jambhala, Red Jambhala, Ganeśa, Black Jambhala and possibly Vasudhārā.

[47] Five of the Tārās are shown in the left half and three in the right. The succession of dangers cannot be identified on the basis of the documentation available to me.

In the upper part of the central square are four couples that represent the central Jinas of the mandala and their female partners in the form specific to the root-mandala of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*.[48] These are arranged clockwise starting from the bottom left couple representing the bright-coloured meditating Sarvadurgatipariśodhanarāja/ Ngan song kun sbying ba'i rgyal ba and his *prajñā*, Locanā, in the same colour and presumably holding an attribute, a *vajra*. Above them is a blue couple depicting Ratnaketu/ Rin chen dpal, who is performing the gesture of giving, and Māmakī. In the top right pair a teaching yellow Jina is shown beside a red goddess. These are Śākyamuni/ Śākya thub pa, who is the Jina of the West in this mandala, and Pāṇḍaravāsinī. Finally, the fourth pair, quite alike to the common Jina representations, depicts Vikasitakusuma/ Me tog cher rgyas accompanied by Tārā/ Sgrol ma.

Thus, in this series, the Sarvavid-Vairocana mandala with 1000 Buddhas is iconographically amalgamated with the regular iconography of the five Jinas, presumably in reference to the Vajradhātumaṇḍala with which this mandala is so closely associated. This does not mean that this is a composite form of the two mandalas, but obviously the concepts underlying the two mandalas were united in this depiction in a harmonious manner.

The directional attribution of each deity of the mandala is not as strictly followed in this series as one would expect from the survey presented so far. To the sides of the two upper Jinas of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, two Pratyekabuddhas are depicted. Their presence is not a repetition as in the case of the deities around Vairocana, but it completes what has been missing in the other paintings. In the outer palace of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana* root-mandala are 16 *śrāvaka* and 12 Pratyekabuddha. While all the *śrāvaka* are represented on the quarter *thang ka* (four *śrāvaka* are found on each quarter *thang ka*) only eight of the Pratyekabuddhas are depicted there (two on each). The four Pratyekabuddhas found in the central *thang ka* are those that are missing from the quarter *thang ka*.

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[48] I utilize here the descriptions of the mandala by Ānandagarbha in the Tibetan Buddhist Canon (*The Tibetan Tripitaka*. Taipei Edition 1991: D 2628) and a more detailed one in the translation of Skorupski (2001: 114–22). These two versions, the latter not in a source immediately connected to the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, differ in part considerably and the depiction here, as far as it can be said from the available documentation, is closer to the latter.

On the Vairocana *thang ka*, too, the bottom row is occupied by a large number of deities of which only two are to be associated with the main topic. These are the two outermost deities, most likely corresponding to Chandra/ Zla ba and to the earth goddess, who protect zenith and nadir respectively. In the centre is a two-armed form of Mahākāla flanked by Vaiśravaṇa/ Rnam thos sras and a form of Śrīdevī/ Dpal ldan lha mo. Ten goddesses that are not recognizable from the documentation available to me flank them.

CONCLUSION

There is obviously much more to say about this topic than is possible to do in this short contribution. Regarding the relevant mandalas, at least three main types have to be differentiated, with a lot of individual differences pointing towards different traditions within these types. The centrepieces pose a number of independent problems.[49]

It may be sufficient to point out in this regard that the iconography of the San Francisco Vairocana, who is depicted one-faced and performing a gesture in front of the breast in which both palms are directed towards the viewer, possibly a variant of the *dharmacakramudrā*, actually does not conform with the cycle I have identified the series with. As in the case of the main figures in the other *thang ka* of this series, this iconography of Vairocana is akin to that of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala and not to that of the mandala based on the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, where Vairocana is unanimously described as four-faced and seated in meditation. However, this contradiction could only be discussed in a wider context covering all so far known representations of the topic, a task I am currently working on.

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[49] To date, more than 25 *thang ka* paintings from different museums and private collections have been identified as being dedicated to a Vajradhātumaṇḍala-related theme. These paintings, when analysed in detail and related to the different textual sources, allow the development of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala to be followed almost up to our times.

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

6. Amoghasiddhi and the Pañcarakṣā, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991.74, (Purchase, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Philanthropic Fund Gift, 1991, 68.9 x 54 cm).
*7. Amoghasiddhi of the northern Quarter of a Vajradhātumaṇḍala (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection).
*8. Comparison of the Amoghasiddhi *thang ka* to the full mandala representation in Dungkar (Drawing, C. Luczanits)
*9. Akṣobhya of the eastern quarter of a Vajradhātu-related mandala (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection)
*10. Ratnasambhava of the sourthern quarter of a Vajradhātu-related mandala with 1000 Buddhas, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (The Avery Brundage Collection, 1991.1).
*11. Vairocana of the centre of a Vajradhātu-related mandala with 1000 Buddhas, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (The Avery Brundage Collection, 1991.1).
12. Detail of the central panel with Vairocana, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (The Avery Brundage Collection, 1991.1).

*THANG KA*S DEDICATED TO THE VAJRADHĀTUMAṆḌALA. QUESTIONS OF STYLISTIC CONNECTIONS

EVA ALLINGER

Following the iconographic discussion by Christian Luczanits, of a Vajradhātumaṇḍala group of *thang ka*s, I would like to discuss stylistic issues within this group. I will be exploring problems of dating using selected *thang ka*s as examples.

There is very little securely datable material from the early period of Tibetan art; most datings are thus approximate. While they can be used to construct chronological series, these can however only remain relative. Here the attempt is being made to establish connections with securely-dated material in order to find better points of chronological reference, at least as far as some of the *thang ka*s in this group are concerned.

GRA THANG

Some of the earliest preserved Tibetan paintings that can be somehow securely dated are the murals in the inner sanctum of the Gra thang monastic complex; Vitali (1990: 58) mentions a date of 1081 for the foundation and 1093 when the work was completed. For example, one panel on the west wall depicts the Buddha preaching (plate 13). Surrounding him in the upper field are *śravaka*s and in the lower field Bodhisattvas and donors. Some of the figures face towards the centre, while others face the sides or look out of the picture. The total impression conveyed is that of a loose assemblage of people, some of whom have individualised facial features. All the figures, including the Buddha, are clothed in rich garments of patterned or plain fabrics, many of which have borders. The jewellery is similarly ornate. The crowns of the Bodhisattvas are decorated with rhomboid elements embellished with precious stones. Their necklaces of gold, precious stones and pearls also give the impression of being elaborately worked. It is striking that many of the Bodhisattvas wear a turban, a distinguish-

ing feature of royal costumes (plate 14). From this it can be assumed that the artist wanted to convey an elaborate, courtly style of life devoted to the service of the Buddha.

VAIROCANA IN THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM

In complete contrast to this is a *thang ka* depicting Vairocana from the Cleveland Museum of Art (Mr and Mrs William H. Marlatt Fund, No. 1989.104; colour plate 15). In his *uṣṇīśa* Vairocana bears an effigy of Phag mo gru pa (1110–1170), a disciple of Sgam po pa, who is depicted last in the lineage in the upper right hand section of the picture (Kossak and Singer 1998: 80). This makes it possible to date this thang ka to the last quarter of the 12th century. If one compares this depiction with that from Gra thang it is obvious that in the intervening period a total change has taken place, not only in religious but also in aesthetic terms. Instead of the loose grouping of people paying homage to the Buddha, here we have a strict order, allowing the painter very little artistic freedom. The composition is axially symmetric, a principle taken to such extremes that even the hand gestures of the two standing and four seated Bodhisattvas are represented in mirror image. The figure of Vairocana dominates the picture; also the Buddha in Gra thang is larger than the other figures but does not make such a dominant impression. The central group around Vairocana together with the lineage at the upper edge fill the framed main section of the painting. In a separate field below are tutelary deities. This basic structure will be enriched later on, but is retained in its basic elements; it could be said to be an essential characteristic of Tibetan composition: a strict order subject only to the laws governing the religious hierarchy of the figures. In terms of execution, the sumptuous details typical of the mural in Gra thang are apparently no longer important here. The jewellery is barely modelled and now gives a two-dimensional impression; for example the long necklaces look more like ribbons than twisted ropes of pearls, the clothing has become very simple, being restricted to short striped *dhoṭi*s draped around the hips.

AMOGHASIDDHI IN A PRIVATE COLLECTION

The earliest representation from the group of Jinas that has a link to the Vajradhātumaṇḍala is an Amoghasiddhi from a private collection (colour plate 7). The Bodhisattvas surrounding him are no longer nameless but correspond to those described in the Vajradhātumaṇḍala. The axially symmetric composition is very similar to that of the Vairocana image and so is the dominating central figure. Here, too, the field with the tutelary deities is separate from the main image. In the Vairocana image, the throne superstructure can barely be made out. The throne of Amoghasiddhi is still very simple, consisting of a simple substructure and a plain throne back with a semi-circular arch above the head of the Jina.

Detailed comparisons can be made with examples from the group of Tibetan-influenced works from Khara Khoto. Following the fall of the city in 1227, very little was produced in Khara Khoto. This gives us a reference date: from the material found there, inferences can be made about Tibetan models from the period around 1200.

In comparing the Amoghasiddhi with the Uṣṇīṣavijayā in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, No. X-2469, it is apparent that the shape of the face is similar (colour plates 16 and 17). They share the same broad chin and almost identical drawing of the face: the eyebrows are strongly arched above the pupils of the eyes, the shape of the eyes and the nose, which is barely modelled, being indicated merely by a threefold curving line; the mouth has a curving upper and lower lip with a repeated line above and below in each case. The central line, arching slightly, is continued on each side of the mouth. Similar rounded individual elements dominate the jewellery in both images.

Once established, the basic type of a strictly hieratic and hierarchically arranged image was extended and elaborated over the subsequent period. In Gra thang the onlooker could still feel drawn into the happening in the image, but now increasing value becomes placed on creating an effect of distance. The composition of the picture becomes more rigid and ornamental, the sublimity of the image emphasized by the use of gilding, as for example in the Akṣobhya in a private collection (colour plate 9).

With the image of Vairocana there are numerous overlaps, which still suggest the impression of spatiality: the Bodhisattvas stand clearly behind Vairocana's knees, but hold their arms in front of his cushion;

the nimbuses of the standing Bodhisattvas partly obscure those of the seated ones; the frame of the picture is also partly covered by figures (the monk at the bottom right beside the lotus, the shoulder and left foot of the left-hand Bodhisattva etc.). Details such as these are almost entirely lacking in later works; at most we find, for example, a bangle or the feet of an animal of the throne back delicately overlapping the frame as in the Akṣobhya in a private collection (colour plate 18). The details in this thang ka are of exquisite draughtmanship, contrasting starkly with the coarse gilded decoration with its distancing effect (colour plate 19).

ZHWA LU

The next securely datable works are murals in the monastery of Zhwa lu. Here Ricca and Fournier (2001: 109 ff.) distinguish between two consecutive styles, namely

i) an early, heavier style in the Sgo gsum lha khang (1290–1303); for example Ratnasambhava (plate 20) and

ii) a later, more delicate and finely detailed style in the Bse sgo ma lha khang (1306–1333); for example Ratnasambhava (plate 21).

The five Jinas are represented in two *lha khang*s. On the whole, their appearance here is completely different. There is no attempt to create a distancing effect, each Jina sits in contemplation, but is never distant; he does not appear to dominate the tiny accompanying figures. The images radiate with cheerful colourfulness, the predominant red, white and yellow contrasting starkly with the deep blue background. A host of fantastic details such as luxuriant fanciful flowers preserve the picture from unrelieved solemnity. The dominant impression is one of softness and delicacy. The jewellery is particularly finely elaborated, consisting of long strings of pearls, filigree necklaces and precious, medallion-like jewellery which often has large stones set at the centre. The *dhoṭis*, worn around the hips, display rich patterning and are draped softly around the knees. The *makara*s and *nāga*s to the sides and above the throne have tails forming scrolling tendrils; thus the Jina's head is not framed by a geometric arch, but by a fanciful structure of floral and faunal forms. Most of these elements indicate that there is a clear connection with Newar art in the art of Zhwa lu.

It is frequently assumed, on the basis of historical connections, that during the 13th century Newar influences became ever more important for Tibetan art. According to Ricca and Fournier (2001: 109), the differences between the two styles in Zhwa lu reflect "the growing autonomy of Tibetan disciples who, while still working under the guidance of Newar masters, were in the process of maturing their specific interpretation of the iconographic rules and of the dominating stylistic conventions in painting". However, on this point it should be said that on the one hand "specific interpretations of the iconographic rules" had already been developed in Tibet itself and that, on the other hand, no Newar *paubhā* painting from before the 14th century has survived in a securely datable form. The characteristics of early Newar painting can only be defined from miniature painting.

One of the very few securely dated examples of Newar painting is the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prājñāpāramitā* manuscript No. A15 in the Asiatic Society Kolkata; it was copied in Year 191 of the Newar Era (=1071 AD) (colour plates 22–24). In contrast to the Indian miniatures of the time, for example the *Pañcarakṣā* manuscript (University Library Cambridge, Add.1688) copied in the 14th regnal year of Nayapāla, i.e. in the middle of the 11th century (plate 25), its miniatures are characterized by extremely free composition; delicate slender-boned figures are depicted in a host of different poses and configurations. They have soft facial features, their bodies are barely modelled and their garments, mostly of transparent materials, fall softly around their forms. The crowns worn by the main figures are often helmet-shaped; another frequent type of headgeer consists of a plain band with points. The thrones are simple and have no superstructures above the heads. Perspective elements can be frequently observed, the figures are often placed staggered one behind the other, but nevertheless do not give the feeling of overcrowding; there is always an impression of space. There is a relatively large number of landscape elements in these images: plants, rocks, water etc. Bright glowing colours are used, with a predominance of red.

From Tibet there are paintings from the 13th century onwards which seem to be closer to the characteristics of Newar style than to those of the earlier Tibetan style. In current art historicel literature on the subject it is frequently assumed that Newar artists worked for Tibetan patrons.

An example of this might be the Virūpa in the Kronos Collection, which can be dated by the inscription on the reverse, reading: "The rite

of consecration of this [painting] of the Great Lord of Yoga, Virupa, with his retinue of eighty mahasiddhas, was done by Sakya Pandita (lineage holder of the Sakya monastery from 1216–1244)" (Kossak and Singer 1998: 138, No. 35) (plate 26). This *thang ka* has a completely different appearance to Tibetan *thang ka*s of the period. The impression it conveys is one of animation rather than ceremonial solemnity, an effect caused less by the free grouping of the figures than by the chess-board-like arrangement of the small fields. These are set off from one another by their differing background colours of red and blue. This method of representation is familiar from Newar book covers, for example those for an *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript (British Library, London, Or. 14203) (plate 27); the manuscript was written in India, the covers added in Nepal in the first half of the 13th century (Losty 1989: 141, 142).

The closest examples to the later (1306–1333), more delicate Zhwa lu style (Ratnasambhava, colour plate 21) are provided by a group of four *thang ka*s belonging to a series: Vairocana (colour plate 11), Ratnasambhava (colour plate 10) and Amoghasiddhi in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (Nos. 1991.1–3), and an Akṣobhya in the Honolulu Academy of Arts. Here, as in the murals at Zhwa lu, the Jinas sit in contemplation at the centre of the picture. They do not have the overpowering dominance that radiates from the image of Vairocana in the Cleveland Museum.

Again, what impresses here is the glowing palette of colours and the wealth of minute, delicately executed detail. Delicate jewellery forms can be seen, as well as a richly-patterned *dhoṭi*, which is wrapped around the legs and under the knees. The same pattern, albeit without stripes, is to be seen on the cloth draped under the lotus seat. The upper parts of the throne backs resemble those from Zhwa lu: *makara*s and *nāga*s unite to form an arch above the nimbus. The lower part of the throne is different in the San Francisco/Honolulu group. On either side of the throne back are four animals, one set above the other: from the bottom, an elephant, a lion (recognisable from its mane), a *kinnara* and an unidentified blue creature. Above these animals on both sides there is an element like a beam with a knob. This form of the throne can be compared with that of one of two covers of an *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prājñāpāramitā* manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Sansk.a.7), covers that were added to an earlier Indian book in Nepal

(ca.12th cent.; Losty in Zwalf 1985: 127; plate 28). This group of *thang kas* was probably created around 1300.

An interesting comparison can be made with the Akṣobhya from a private collection (colour plate 9), which at a first cursory glance affords a very "antiquated" impression; the tradition of the Cleveland Vairocana is still to be felt. A central image dominates the main group of the picture, an impression emphasized by the heavy gilding. The artist chose as a more "modern" element, the form of the throne, which is very similar to that in the San Francisco/Honolulu group, but did not adopt other Newar elements. Thus a date for the Akṣobhya sometime in the late 13th century would seem probable; the old hieratic tradition was apparently influential for a considerable length of time, a phenomenon that is unsurprising given the sanctity inherent to the representing of the Jinas.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it may be said—in a very loose sense—that in Tibet, around 1200, iconographic solutions for many themes were found which were felt to be valid in the subsequent development of Tibetan art. While these were extended and developed, they remained unchanged in their fundamental principles.

Among the themes for which a canonical form was found around 1200 were the representations of the Jinas as part of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala and the portraits of lamas as the founders of monasteries and teachers in iconographic forms that had been previously developed for depictions of Buddhas (for example a portrait of Taglung Thangpa Chenpo [Stag lung thang pa chen po] in a private collection; Kossak and Singer 1998: 91–93), as well as footprint *thang ka*s (for example Saṃvara and Vajravārāhī in the Musée Guimet, Paris, MA 5176; Béguin 1990: 20, 21) and the representation of deities in their strictly composed iconographic arrangement (for example the Green Tārā in The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, from the John and Berthe Ford Collection; Pal 2001: 226–28; for the dating, Allinger 1997 and 1998) or in the representation if deities in a maṇḍala (for example the Vajravārāhī Maṇḍala in a private collection; Kossak and Singer 1998: 96–99).

The subsequent stylistic developments naturally absorbed foreign influences—initially Newar, later Chinese—and integrated them into the formal repertoire of Tibetan art.

I thank Christian Luczanits and Christiane Papa-Kalantari for their constructive criticism and suggestions; furthermore I thank the private owner of the *thang ka*s depicting Amoghasiddhi and Akṣobhya for providing me with photographic material.

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

*7. Amoghasiddhi of the northern Quarter of a Vajradhātumaṇḍala (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection)
*9. Akṣobhya of the eastern quarter of a Vajradhātu-related mandala (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection)
13. Śākyamuni, *śravakas*, Bodhisattvas and donors, Gra thang, inner sanctum, west wall (After Henss 1994: fig. 5)
14. Head of a *bodhisattva*, Gra thang, inner sanctum (After Heller 1999: pl.46)
*15. Vairocana, The Cleveland Museum of Art (Mr and Mrs William Marlatt Fund, 1989.104) (after Kossak and Singer 1998: No.13)
*16. Amoghasiddhi, detail of the head in plate 7 (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection)
*17. Uṣṇīṣavijayā, The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (X-2469). (After: Piotrovsky 1993: No.15)
*18. Akṣobhya, detail of the throne back in plate 9 (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection)
*19. Akṣobhya, detail of the legs in plate 9 (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection)
20. Ratnasambhava, Zhwa lu, Sgo gsum lha khang. (After Kreijger 1997: pl. 195).
21. Ratnasambhava, Zhwa lu, Bse sgo ma lha khang. (After Kossak and Singer 1998: fig. 21)
*22. Mahattārī Tārā, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā,* Asiatic Society, Calcutta (No. A 15, fol. 103v). (Photo: E. Allinger, No. 492/16)
*23. Tārā, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā,* Asiatic Society, Calcutta (No. A 15, fol. 113r). (Photo: E. Allinger, No. 492/18)
*24. Lokeśvara, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā,* Asiatic Society, Calcutta (No. A 15, fol. 145v). (Photo: E. Allinger, No. 492/24)
25. Mañjuśrī, *Pañcarakṣā,* University Library Cambridge (Add.1688, fol. 20r). (After Pal and Meech Pekarik, n.d.: pl. 8)
26. Virūpa, The Kronos Collection (After Kossak and Singer 1998: No.35)
27. Scenes from the life of the Buddha, MS covers *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prājñāparamitā*, London, British Library (Or.14203) (After Zwalf 1985: No.159, S 114)
28. *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, MS cover, Oxford, Bodleian Library (MS Sansk.a.7. After Barrett 1980: 52)

THE WALL PAINTINGS OF THE *MGON KHANG* OF LCANG SGANG KHA

HELMUT F. NEUMANN AND HEIDI A. NEUMANN

In his seminal historical work *Bhutan, the Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom*, published in 1979, Michael Aris reproduced three black and white photos of the wall paintings in the *mgon khang* of Lcang Sgang kha in Central Bhutan. Aris was fully aware of the importance of these wall paintings, since he commented on them:

> The paintings may well be the oldest in the country and seem to have survived because the temple in which they are found is classified as a *mgon khang* dedicated to guardian spirits. They are not so often subjected to that continuous process of refurbishment which has effaced the ancient art of the country (Aris 1979: 177).

It is one of the characteristics of a living religion that its architecture and artistic expressions are subject to continuous change. The alterations are influenced by changes of religious doctrines which require different iconographic depictions, but also by new artistic trends or styles. As a consequence, new temples are erected and existing temples are renovated in accordance with the prevalent religious and artistic preference of the time. This is a worldwide phenomenon which can be observed in most cultures of various countries e.g. in Greek and Roman temples, in Christian churches, Islamic mosques and Hindu temples. It is therefore not surprising that Buddhist temples are renovated, also in the Himalayas. In none of the Himalayan regions did these changes occur as consistently as in Bhutan: the walls of most Bhutanese temples are painted in a specific, almost uniform Bhutanese style, which has prevailed in the last two centuries in the entire country.

Thus the interior of the Zlum rtse lha khang in the Paro valley, built in 1421 by Thang stong Rgyal po in the form of a *mchod rten*, manifests itself with wall paintings created in the course of the restoration of 1841 (Pommaret 1990: 129). A similar fate was witnessed by the Staktsang lha khang,[1] called the 'Tiger's Lair', in view of the tradition of its con-

[1] See details of wall paintings in Mehra 1974.

nection with Padmasambhava and its inspiring position on a mountain cliff, one of the holiest temples of Bhutan. Although built in the 14th century, its earliest surviving wall paintings are those created in the course of the renovation of 1861–1865 (Pommaret 1990: 126).

It is therefore really not surprising that the *mgon khang* of Lcang Sgang kha was also renovated. This occurred in the early 1990s and led to the loss of the earliest Bhutanese wall paintings which had survived to that day.[2] Although fully understandable from a religious standpoint, the overpainting of the wall paintings is a serious problem for art historians. With the exception of fragments of early wall paintings in a ruined temple in Eastern Tibet near the border to Arunachal Pradesh, shown by John Ardussi in his lecture at this conference,[3] there are no known wall paintings in Bhutan which do not postdate those of Lcang Sgang kha by at least half a millennium.

Like the other temples of Lcang Sgang kha, the *mgon khang* is inaccessible to foreigners. Under special circumstances, in 1984 one of the authors of this paper was allowed a short time to photograph the paintings surviving on the walls of the *mgon khang*. Therefore the possibly unique photographic material presented here is not complete; but it comprises all of the better preserved paintings and most of the deities, which can be rather well recognized despite the obvious water damages. On the basis of the available photographic documentation, this contribution aims at giving an iconographic overview of the deities represented and at unravelling their art historical connections.

Colour plate 29 shows four figures wearing long coats. On the basis of their inscription they can be easily identified as belonging to the group of the eight planets or heavenly bodies, the *gza' chen po bryad*, the *navagraha*s. On the top row the left figure is Gza' pa sangs, Friday, the planet Venus. To his right is Gza' phur bu, Thursday, standing for Jupiter. In the lower row, the left figure represents Gza' zla ba, Monday, the moon, and the right figure Gza' lhag pa, Wednesday, the planet Mercury.

A second discernible group of deities are the three *nāga*s (colour plates 31 and 32), pictured in their hybrid aspect with human upper body and a snake lower body. The first *nāga*, his hands joined in *añjalimudrā*, holding up a curled snake, is inscribed Dga' bo, corresponding

2 Françoise Pommaret, personal communication 2000.

3 John Ardussi: A report on Bhutanese castle ruins and caves associated with Lhasras Gtsang-ma.

to the *nāgarāja* Nanda (Chandra: 1999–2000: 914). The three *nāga*s are protected by snake hoods, with the heads of the snakes emerging above their heads. The hood of Dga' bo is formed by five snakes. While Dga' bo is known to belong to a group of three *nāga*s, e. g. in the Mongolian Buddhist pantheon (Chandra 1991: 169), the other two *nāga*s, as preserved on the walls of Lcang Sgang kha, have hoods formed by seven *nāga* heads, indicating their higher rank: No rgyas ba (Vāsuki) is holding an *akṣamālā* in his hands raised in *añjalimudrā*, whereas the third *nāga* holds a stalk topped by a conch. He is inscribed Dung skyong, corresponding to Saṅkhapāla (Bsod nams Rgya mtsho 1983: 338). Both Vāsuki and Saṅkhapāla belong to the group of eight *nāgarāja*s, *klu brgyad*, taken over simultaneously with other groups of deities from the Hindu pantheon into *vajrayāna* Buddhist literature. This group of eight *nāgarāja*s occurs in the Dharmadhātu Vāgīṣvara *maṇḍala* as part of a large congregation of deities beyond the fourth circle (Bhattacharyya 1972: 65)

The third recognizable group of deities and by far the largest is represented by the *Sgyu skar nyi shu rtsa rgyad*, the *nakṣatra*s constellations and lunar mansions (colour plates 33–38). In 1984 six *nakṣatra*s could be fully recorded photographically and two additional *nakṣatra*s only partially. They all wear a crown and are dressed in a long sleeveless coat, which curls up above the shoulders over a wide dress with long sleeves. Unlike the group of the similarly dressed *navagraha*s, who are standing, the *nakṣatra*s are represented seated in *dhyānāsana* backed by a throne cushion, behind which the triangles of the throne back are barely visible.

Also these deities could all be identified by their inscriptions. Khrums smad (colour plates 33 and 35), the 25th *nakṣatra*, and Khrum stod (colour plates 34 and 36), the 24th *nakṣatra*, both carry a flower of the blue lotus *utpala* in their right hand; a pair of reclining bulls, the *vāhana* of Khrums stod, is painted below his seat cushion. Bya'u (colour plate 37), the 12th *nakṣatra*, carries the stalk of a lotus flower with a flaming *triratna* in his right hand. Bra nye (colour plate 38), the 17th *nakṣatra*, is characterized by the vivid depiction of his *vāhana*, Srin po, a flesh eating demon. The 20th *nakṣatra*, Bya spo, is pictured seated on a large smiling snow lion. The existence of a further *nakṣatra*, Sha zla, to the right of Bra nye, can be inferred from his *vāhana*, the horse, the head of which is visible next to Srin po's right foot. Similarly, on the left side of Khrums stod there must be Bya bzhug, the 21st

nakṣatra, since to the left of his two bulls a Garuḍa, Bya bzhug's *vāhana* is visible.

A comment on the inscribed names of the *nakṣatra*s is necessary here. They can be found on a list with the old and present Tibetan names of the 28 *nakṣatra*s.[4] Two names, Khrums stod and Khrums smad, figure on the list of present Tibetan names of the 28 *nakṣatra* (Bsod nams Rgya mtsho 1983: 338). Three names, Bya bzhug, Bya stod and Bya'u, however, are old Tibetan names for these *nakṣatra*s. Bra nye is mentioned on both lists with the identical name. It may therefore be speculated that the murals of Lcang Sgang kha were painted at a time of transition from the old to the new names of the *nakṣatra*s.

In addition to the *navagraha*s, *nāga*s and *nakṣatra*s, our photographic documentation of the wall paintings at Lcang Sgang kha comprises only four other deities, the affiliation of which is not as easily recognizable. They are seated on a single lotus. The inscriptions read:

1. *Gang ba bzang po*, one of the eight brothers of Vaiśravaṇa and hence a *yakṣa* (Tucci 1949: 575). He corresponds to Pūrḍabhadra, one of the Eight Aśvapati, Rta bdag, of Vaiśravaṇa (Chandra 1999–2000: 1067) and one of the Eight *yakṣa* Kings in the Dharmadhātu Vāgīśvara *maṇḍala* (Bhattacharyya 1972: 66).

2. *Dzam bha la ser po*, Jambhala in his yellow form, easily recognizable by the mongoose which he holds in his left hand. Dzam bha la ser po is the only deity represented in the Indian fashion, wearing only a *dhotī* and jewellery. Jambhala also belongs to the group of the Eight Aśvapati of Vaiśravaṇa.

3. *A pa ra ci ta*, a male deity, certainly corresponding to *yakṣa* Aparajita (Chandra 1991: no. 837).

4. *Lha chen gzhon nu smin*, the only deity that could not be identified.

Three of the four additional deities belong to the circle of Vaiśravaṇa and are *yakṣa*s. As Tucci pointed out, by extending the assimilation of old Indian deities to the *yakṣa*s, Buddhism created a link to India's earliest religious experiences (Tucci 1949: 577).

[4] We are very grateful to David Jackson for having taken the initiative to make this list available to us.

To sum up the iconographical situation, we find: *navagraha*s, *nāga*s, *nakṣatra*s and *yakṣa*s. There is a complete absence of major deities of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. There are no Jinas or other Buddhas, no *bodhisattva*s, no female deities/Tārā, nor any of the more common wrathful or protecting deities. Trying to understand the religious background to which the deities of the *mgon khang* of Lcang Sgang kha are connected, we have to look for parallels in other monasteries.

The *mgon khang* of the Zhwa lu Gser khang immediately comes to one's mind. Its walls are also fully painted with similar groups of deities. In one of the small chapels are the 28 *nakṣatra*s. The chapel on the opposite side contains wall paintings of the *dikpāla*s, the *navagraha*s, *nāga*s and *mahādeva*s.

With the exception of the *dikpāla*s and most of the *mahādeva*s, for which we have no record at Lcang Sgang kha, the other groups of deities are those which were also present on the walls of the *mgon khang* at Lcang Sgang kha. This leads to the suggestion that they may have a similar religious background. Are they also based on the same text? This might be the case for the general set-up, i.e. the selection of the deities, but not for their detailed representation, since in this respect there are clear differences between Lcang Sgang kha and Zhwa lu. This can be exemplified for the *nakṣatra*s. In Zhwa lu (colour plate 39), the *nakṣatra*s are painted dressed in Indian fashion with a 'choli' as upper garment, whereas in Lcang Sgang kha they wear heavy Tibetan clothes. In Zhwa lu, the *nakṣatra*s hold their hands in *añjalimudrā*, as described in the relevant *sādhanas*, which is not the case in Lcang Sgang kha.

In their publication on the paintings of the *mgon khang* of the Zhwa lu Gser khang, Ricca and Fournier (1966) point to the fact that the deities represented are originally Hindu gods and semi gods which populate the outer circle of important *maṇḍala*s. Specifically, the presence of the *navagraha*s and *nakṣatra*s is typical for both the Dharmadhātu Vāgīśvara and the Durgatipariśodhana *maṇḍala*.

But the absence of all deities related to *maṇḍala* circles almost precludes the possibility for *maṇḍala* literature to be the iconographic source for the wall paintings. In the search for the reason why these wall paintings were created, one should rather look for a text in which these 'minor' deities play a more central role.

In an effort to cast some light on the dating of the Lcang Sgang kha paintings, we have to ask what is known about the history of this

monastery, particularly its foundation, since this could yield a date *post quem*.

According to various historical records (Aris 1979: 170, 175–76; Lam Pema Tshewang 2001: 57–61) the monastery was founded by Nyi ma, one of the sons of the famous Pha jo drug gom Zhig po, who arrived in Bhutan in 1219. His mother was born in 1199 near Thimpu. Both of his parents died in the same year, in 1251. To commemorate the death of his parents, Nyi ma undertook the task of enlarging the temple of Lcang Sgang kha. Historical records state that several statues were installed in the temple in this context, though wall paintings are not mentioned. However, from the historical data, it may be inferred that Lcang Sgang kha must have been founded in the fourth decade of the 13th century, which would be the earliest possible date for the wall paintings.

How do the Lcang Sgang kha wall paintings relate stylistically to other early Tibetan wall paintings? The heavy Tibetan dress of the *navagraha*s (colour plates 29 and 30) and *nakṣatra*s (colour plates 33–38) recalls those of the Buddhas, *bodhisattva*s and *śravaka*s of Grwa thang monastery in Tibet dating to the second half of the 11th century (Henss 1997: fig. 176). Even the boots of the Buddhas in Grwa thang remind us of the Lcang Sgang kha paintings. A Buddha wearing boots is a rarity in Buddhist painting. At Lcang Sgang kha, the footwear is represented by shoes of the type of ladies' slippers, not boots with a dark sole, since one can discern two narrow bands over the forefoot.

In order to suggest a possible date for the Lcang Sgang kha paintings from a stylistic viewpoint, a detailed comparison of the stylistic elements with those of other early Tibetan wall paintings may be useful. As a starting point we may use the paintings of Bya'u (colour plate 37) and the details of Khrums smad (colour plate 35) and Khrums stod (colour plate 36). They wear a crown with three triangles as main elements. It appears to be bound by a band, the ends of which stand out in a fan-like form on both sides of the heads. Where the band is visible, between the triangles, it shows an intricate design. Two flowers appear to be attached to the band above the ears. The deity is seated against a cushion with a very complex design of larger and smaller scrolling elements, behind which a triangle appears on either side, representing parts of the otherwise invisible throne back.

As a first comparison we choose a painting from Grwa thang. The *bodhisattva Mañjuśrī* (colour plate 40), perhaps one of the most beau-

tiful surviving examples of early Tibetan painting, wears a double crown with triangular elements, held together by a red band or ribbon over a green cloth with a design of scrolls. On one side emerges the fan-like end of the ribbon, which on the other side is floating freely. Only rarely can the different elements of the headgear be seen with such clarity.

A few decades earlier, the head of the *bodhisattva* from Zhwa lu (colour plate 41), from one of the earliest surviving Tibetan wall paintings had been painted in a similar style, with beautiful facial features, though the headgear is much less refined. But that may have resulted from the overpainting which occurred in the beginning of the 14th century. Both paintings date from the 11th century and mark the beginning of a Pāla-derived style, which was prevalent in Tibet during the 12th century and up to the third quarter of the 13th century, continuously taking up and transforming new stylistic trends from the major monastic centres in Bihar and Bengal.

Comparing the paintings from Lcang Sgang kha with the Grwa thang and Zhwa lu paintings, the similarity of stylistic elements becomes evident, but also the greater sophistication of the southern Tibetan counterparts. The Lcang Sgang kha paintings are less refined, but more powerful. And yet, there is a significant similarity in the lines delineating the face, ears, eyebrows and lips. The greatest difference is in the painting of the eyes: the Tibetan *bodhisattva*s have the upper lid lowered to cover a great part of the pupil, while the eyes of the Lcang Sgang kha deities are wide open; in that respect, they resemble the eyes of the Zhwa lu *nakṣatra* (colour plate 39). This difference can therefore be explained on iconographic rather than on stylistic grounds. The issue of style and period becomes further complicated by the fact that the style of a particular painting is not only influenced by the artistic trends prevalent at the time, but also by personal preferences and even abilities of the artist.

On the whole the Lcang Sgang kha paintings share more features with the Zhwa lu *bodhisattva* in the corridor of the *mgon khang* (colour plate 41) than with the paintings in the small chapels of the *mgon khang* (colour plate 39), which, however, are probably not much later.

The paintings dating to the great renovation and enlargement of the Zhwa lu Gser khang in the end of the 13th/ first quarter of the 14th cen-

tury are, however, very different. Taking the paintings of the Ṣaḍakṣarī chapel as an example (Neumann 2001), we are faced with a more exuberant style. This becomes evident in the emphasis on the decorative aspects, particularly of the main deities such as Ṣaḍakṣarī and Vāsuki, but also in the deities of the *maṇḍala* which, because of their small size could not lend themselves to refined ornamental details.

The paintings at Lcang Sgang kha must have been executed by the end of the 13th century. They clearly resemble the earlier paintings at Grwa thang and Zhwa lu more than the paintings of the Ṣaḍakṣarī chapel. But we resist the temptation to take this as an interpolation on the time axis. We regard it as entirely possible, if not even probable, that the lost paintings of the Lcang Sgang kha *mgon khang* were created around the time of the foundation of the monastery, in the fourth decade of the 13th century. The Lcang Sgang kha paintings do not contain any elements which we would not be able to find in Tibetan paintings of the middle of the 13th century. However, without the limits set by the historical data, one might have favoured a slightly earlier date.

In fact, although not very probable, an earlier date cannot be altogether excluded. When Pha jo divided Bhutan between his four sons and Nyi ma chose Lcang Sgang kha as a centre of his religious and worldly power, it is quite possible that the latter selected a place which was already inhabited at that time. It is further conceivable that the building which contains the wall paintings had been in use for cults which were overshadowed by the new doctrines which Pha jo had brought into the country. In that sense the foundation of the Lcang Sgang kha monastery would then represent the erection of a new more important temple in the vicinity of the old temple which at that time or in a later period, was converted into a *mgon khang*.

The precise dates of the Lcang Sgang kha paintings will probably never be ascertained. Whether middle of 13th century or earlier, what remains is the memory of some of the most fascinating early Tibetan wall paintings. As evident from the details such as the face of the *nakṣatra* Khrums smad (colour plate 35), which has the presence of a true masterpiece, the paintings of Lcang Sgang kha are not only the earliest paintings in Bhutan, but can be reckoned among the strongest expressions of early Tibetan art.

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

*29. Four *navagraha*s, wall painting of the *mgon khang* at Lcang Sgang kha.
*30. Gza' zla ba, the *navagraha* Candra.
*31. Dga' bo, the *nāgarāja* Nanda.
*32. No rgyas ba, the *nāgarāja* Vāsuki.
*33. Khrums smad, the 25th constellation.
*34. Khrums stod, the 24th constellation.
*35. Khrums smad, the 25th constellation (detail).
*36. Khrums stod, the 24th constellation (detail).
*37. Bya'u, the 12th constellation.
*38. Bra nye, the 17th constellation.
39. A *nakṣatra*, Zhwa lu monastery, *mgon khang*.
40. Mañjuśrī, wall painting in Grwa thang monastery.
41. Head of a *bodhisattva*, wall painting in Zhwa lu monastery, eastern corridor of the old *mgon khang*.

LIBERATION FROM THE PAIN OF EVIL DESTINIES: THE GIANT APPLIQUÉ *THANG KA*S (*GOS SKU*) AT GYANTSE (RGYAL RTSE DPAL 'KHOR CHOS SDE)

MICHAEL HENSS

Once a year at *sa-ga zla ba*, "the full-moon day of the saga constellation", which is the festival commemorating Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and *nirvāṇa* at the full moon of the fourth Tibetan month, one of a set of three huge silk brocade *thang ka*s is displayed for a few hours at Dpal 'khor chos sde monastery in Gyantse (Rgyal rtse), Southwestern Tibet (Gtsang Province). This is a ritual that I was able to document on the 19th June 2000 and 9th June 2001.

The giant 15th-century cloth images (*gos sku chen mo*) in Gyantse have had little mention by modern authors[1] and similarly brief reference in historical records ('Jigs med grags pa 1987 and *Myang chos 'byung* 1983). This paper therefore represents a first attempt at documenting these banners which—except for some late 17th century *gos sku* in the Potala Palace—are the only original early fabric *thang ka*s of this type in Tibet to have survived to the present day. The analysis in this paper is supported by some nearly contemporary textual sources, and it describes the history, iconography, style, technique and ritual presentation of these important brocade *thang ka*s.

The three giant fabric *thang ka*s preserved in the Dpal 'khor chos sde gtsug lag khang—each approximately 22.5 by 22.5 metres in size—probably once formed a set representing the Buddhas of the Three Ages. It is likely that these were displayed one after the other on three successive days, as is still the case for the three "silken paintings"

[1] Tucci 1989, vol. IV.1: 62; Chan 1994: 420f. (with misleading and undocumented data on two Śākyamuni *gos sku* 1419 and 1432); Lo Bue 1992: 564f.; Reynolds 1996: 250f. It is evident that extravagant and luxurious ritual banners, made of precious and often lavishly designed Chinese silks, originally were held in higher esteem than painted scrolls. Perhaps because of modern Western aesthetic standards, they have been overshadowed by their painted counterparts and only rarely been the subject of scholarly publications. Cf. Tanaka 1994, with a short selective overview on textual records and techniques; Reynolds 1996 and 1999; Henss 1997.

(made in the 1980s) at Bkra shis lhun po monastery.[2] One of the Gyantse monumental silk images, depicting Dīpaṇkara—the Buddha of the Past—has not been shown since at least the late 1930s, probably because of its poor condition. It was then that the first photographs were published of the other two central *gos sku* and of the right hand side panel.[3] The left side banner reportedly was removed by the British and brought to England during the Younghusband expedition in 1904. It was returned to Tibet during the political mission under Charles Bell sometime between 1906 and 1921. It has not been displayed since then due to serious damage.[4] The two remaining principal scrolls, manufactured approximately 570 years ago, are in surprisingly good, and, in the case of the Atiśa Śākyamuni banner, near pristine condition. Only some cracked appliqué sections at the feet and palms of the hands and at the lotus throne can be found on the Maitreya *gos sku*. However, the side-banner presently displayed is more worn, as it is evident by the fading of the red-coloured clothes of the two uppermost *bodhisattva*s and in the sections of the fourth *bodhisattva* from the top of the banner.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE ŚĀKYAMUNI *GOS SKU* (COLOUR PLATE 42)

The central Buddha, in *bhūmisparśamudrā* with the alms bowl in his left hand, is dressed in a red patchwork robe and is surrounded by an elaborate "Six Ornaments" (*rgyan drug*) *prabhā*. Śākyamuni is flanked by two standing *bodhisattva*s: to his left, a yellow-brown Maitreya, in *vitarkamudrā* with an *amṛta kalaśa* and an antelope skin; and, to his

[2] Rnam rgyal 1998: 144–46 (plates). The Amitāyus-like Buddha of the Past is identified here as Kāśyapa.

[3] See Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, Santa Ana/USA 2003: ill. p.127 (photograph by Theos Bernard, 1939). A colour photograph by F.Bailey (1938, Maitreya *gos sku* and side-banner to the right) was published in LIFE magazine, vol.6, no.24, New York 1939; another one by M.R.Roberts (Śākyamuni *gos sku* and side-banner to the right) in ATLANTIS magazine, vol.XXIII, Zürich 1951: 140. An elderly caretaker at the Dpal 'khor chos sde told me in 2001 that he had not seen during his life-time the damaged Dīpaṇkara *gos sku* about which no other information is known to exist. Apparently nobody has seen the Dīpaṇkara and the left side-banner, now stored in the *gtsug lag khang* from at least the 1920s.

I wonder if the Dīpaṇkara banner may be identical with the "Buddha" from 1432 as mentioned in texts (cf. n.20).

[4] Local information gathered at Gyantse in 2001; cf.n. 5.

right, a white Avalokiteśvara, in *varadamudrā* and holding a lotus (plate 43). On the sides of the lion's throne, which is adorned by a *dharmacakra* and two white snow lions, are seated the disciples of the Buddha, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. In the upper left hand corner, a white Vairocana can be seen, and to the right is a yellow-brown four-armed Prajñāpāramitā. The latter deity may allude to the 8000-verse *Prajñāpāramitā* text edited during the reign of the Gyantse prince Rab rtan kun bzang 'phags pa (1389–1442, ruled 1414–1442). Note should also be made of the two historical figures depicted in the roundels between these divinities, and of the yellow and white circular symbols of the sun and moon. The "Perfection of Wisdom" texts were extensively promoted by an outstanding master and patron of arts and crafts, 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan (1364–1422), "the great abbot of Gnas rnying" and teacher of Tsong kha pa, who had supervised the manufacture of a monumental *gos sku chen mo* at Gnas rnying monastery before 1413.[5] He also consecrated some of the principal images and chapels of Dpal 'khor chos sde *gtsug lag khang* (roundel to the right, plate 45) in 1421.[6] The other proponent of the "Perfection of Wisdom" featured here is the Gnas rnying abbot Sems dpa' chen po chos kyi rin chen, also known as Chos kyi rin chen (1199–1255, abbotship 1241–1255), who is said to have been the seventh reincarnation of Atiśa (roundel to the left, plate 44).[7] Both masters portrayed in this *gos sku* are featured in the two core text sources for the history, art and architecture of the Gyantse monastery: 'Jigs med grags pa's History of the Princes of Gyantse (*Rgyal rtse chos rgyal gyi rnam par thar pa*) completed in 1481 and the historical guide to Myang area (*Myang chos 'byung*) attributed to Tāranātha (1575–1635). Identification of these two historical figures was confirmed to the author by local scholars in 2001.

[5] Jackson 1996: 111, 134 (n. 265). The giant fabric *thang ka* at Gnas rnying must have been manufactured by Ma the ba Dpal 'byor rin chen, who is very probably identical with the Dpon mo che Rin chen dpal 'byor known to be working at Gyantse, before 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan's visit to China in 1413.

[6] 'Jigs med grags pa 1987: 234. 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po is probably identical with the Gnas rnying abbot 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal ba; cf. Lo Bue 1992: 565; and Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 22f. For a clay statue and for a mural in the Bu ston chapel on the fourth floor in the Rgyal rtse sku 'bum see Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 290 and ill. on p.299; and Xiong Wenbin 2001, pl.206. Cf. also Jackson 1996: 111, 134.

[7] For a clay statue of this master—who reconstructed Gnas rnying after the Mongol attack in 1240—in the Prajñāpāramitā chapel on the fourth floor of the Gyantse Sku 'bum, see Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: ill. p. 292 and Vitali 2002: 100f.

A decorative golden *lan dza* script border on blue brocade ground surrounds the square panel on all four sides, an ornamental element characteristic of the wall-paintings in the Great Stupa.[8] A few handwritten inscriptions, likely to have been contemporary to the creation of the banner, can be seen on the outer border of the linen. These include short prayers such as (*mi 'gyur lhun po sku yi bkra shis shog*) and *bden pa'i smon lam 'di dag myur 'grub shog*. Numerous contemporary inscriptions of *mantra*s related to the lineage, to the *tantra*s, and to the principal divinities depicted on the *gos sku* can be seen on the supporting material at those sections where the appliqué silks have been damaged (plate 46).[9]

Iconographically the Śākyamuni of this banner appears to be represented in *vajrāsana*; it recalls a similar portrait of the contemporary "image of the great Mahāmuni" in the *bum pa* of the Great Stupa "identical with the image of Mahābodhi at Vajrāsana" at Bodhgaya.[10]

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE MAITREYA *GOS SKU* (COLOUR PLATE 47)

The second fabric *thang ka* in Gyantse depicts a yellow-coloured crowned Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future, his right hand raised in *vitarkamudrā*, the left in *dhyanamudrā*. He is adorned with a multicoloured scarf, rich jewellery and his characteristic attributes: the longevity water flask on the lotus to his left, a white antelope skin around his neck and a stupa on top of his crown. The masterfully achieved appliqué technique emphasizes the monumentality of the image, which is surrounded by a highly decorative nimbus consisting in a circle of rays. The central figure is assisted by the same *bodhisattva*s as are present on the Śākyamuni *thang ka*: to his left, a yellow Maitreya

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[8] See for example Tucci 1989: pls. 142, 152, 342, 364 etc.

[9] These *mantra*s are also mentioned by 'Jigs med grags pa 1987: 242, and appear to cover the supporting fabric in positions corresponding to the figures on the appliqué surface.

[10] Inscription in the southern chapel of the *bum pa*, as reported in Tucci 1989: 244. For a similar iconological context of the *gos sku* note also the statues in the *bum pa* chapels: Buddha in *vajrāsana*, Vairocana, Prajñāpāramitā, the *bodhisattva*s Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi, and Śākyamuni's disciples Maudgalyāyana and Śāriputra.

with a water flask and, to his right, a white Avalokiteśvara with a lotus and an antelope skin (colour plate 48); both display the *vitarkamudrā*. Two disciples of the Buddha, corresponding to Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana in the Śākyamuni banner, are seated in the lowermost corners on both sides of the lotus throne. These are not usually displayed since the *thang ka*, as a rule, is not completely unrolled to its full height. In the upper section, a yellow Śākyamuni (left) and a red Amitāyus (right) are depicted. Above them are placed two groups of the Five Tathagatas, and the Buddhas of the Ten Directions, each group enclosing a yellow sun and a white moon disc, showing respectively the three-legged sun-bird and the moon-hare. These ancient Chinese symbols of power and authority (*jin miao*, *yu tu*) represent the permanent auspicious twin unity of the cosmos. This foreign vocabulary was introduced from Chinese or Chinese-inspired works of art.

The two monk-scholars at both sides of the jewel-in-the-lotus motif on top of Maitreya's crown are especially important. These are visible just below the golden *lhan tsha* script frieze on red brocade ground, of which only the upper and lower section have been preserved. The master with the red pandit hat can be identified in historical texts, and—as confirmed by local scholars in 2000—is the Indian scholar, *abhidharma* author and abbot of Bodhgaya, Paṇ chen Śrī Śāriputra (Śākyaśrī Śāriputra Mahāsvāmin, colour plates 50 and 51). He arrived in 1418 while on his way to become one of his principal teachers to the Ming court at Nanjing and was invited by the Gyantse ruler Rab brtan kun bzang to spend two months in his principality.[11] As on the Śākyamuni *gos sku*, opposite him is depicted the 13th century Bka' gdams pa (?) master Sems dpa' chen po chos kyi rin chen (colour plate 49).

Only Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī can be identified among the five seated *bodhisattva*s on the right hand side-banner. This is approximately 22.5 by 5.5 metres in size, and is framed on three sides by a *lan dza* script border. The same iconography, though probably with a different

[11] According to Shastri 2002: 130f., the abbot of Bodhgaya came to Gyantse "sometime in 1418" to Gyantse. However, the Tibetan text of the history of the Princes of Gyantse clearly places his arrival there under the year 1414, when the Indian pandit consecrated the beautiful six-arcade bridge built across the Myang river earlier that year (cf. Lo Bue 1992: 562, 563 pl. 3, 569), no longer extant. The pandit Śāriputra in the Maitreya *gos sku* appears to be identical with the Paṇ chen Śrī Śāriputra mentioned in the inscription under his portrait the Lam 'bras lha khang murals in the main monastic building (1425), depicted there also in *dharmacakramudrā* and with the pandit red hat. Cf. 'Jigs med grags pa 1987: 240ff.; *Myang chos 'byung* 1983: 51f.; Tucci 1949: 632 and n. 153, 665 and n. 819.

set of five *bodhisattvas*, may be suggested for the left side-banner, which once would have completed this monumental triptych.

HISTORY AND DATE

The set of three *thang kas* was commissioned in 1436 by Rab brtan kun bzang, the great patron of art and architecture in Gyantse, and—according to the *chronicle* by 'Jigs med grags pa, who claims to have received this information directly from the chief artist—manufactured between 1437 and 1439 ('Jigs med grags pa 1987: 230 ff., 240–45; cf. Tucci 1949: 666, and Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 26).

The sketch for the Śākyamuni *gos sku*, Rab brtan kun bzang's "ninth great donation", was made either in the Fire-Dragon year 1436 or, more probably, in the Fire-Serpent year 1437, "when the king was forty-eight". Work on the Maitreya, the more elaborate and refined of the two silken images, began in 1437. This apparently was conceived after a vision which the Gyantse ruler had of the Future Buddha. The Maitreya banner was consecrated in memory of Rab brtan kun bzang's mother, Byang sems bzang nga pa (died 1435), with a *mandala* ritual of the Four Categories of Tantra (*rgyud sde bzhi dkyil 'khor*) conducted by the eminent Bo dong pa master Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451). The consecration occurred at *sa-ga zla ba*, on the 15^{th} day of the fourth month in the Earth-Horse year 1438, a day when a rainbow and many auspicious signs appeared. The Maitreya banner was completed in the third month of the Earth-Sheep year 1439.

Five other appliqué *thang kas* in Gyantse are recorded in historical texts, but no longer exist:

1. "A great image on silk" of unknown iconography once kept in the Bsam 'phel rin po che gling temple (1390–1397), the assembly hall of the Gyantse castle; this had been commissioned by Kun dga' 'phags pa (1357–1412), the father of Rab brtan kun bzang, datable to the 1390s or at least before 1412 (Tucci 1989, vol. IV.1:62; cf. also Lo Bue 1992: p. 564, n.33).

2. Śākyamuni, flanked by Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, Maitreya, Dīpaṇkara, the 16 *sthaviras*, the central figure being approximately three metres in height; commissioned by Rab brtan kun bzang in 1418, and manufactured by 37 artists in 27 days (Lo Bue 1992: 564 (after *Myang chos 'byung*: 52); Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 20; 'Jigs med grags pa 1987: 241).

3. Maitreya woven with 23 bolts of golden silk material for the Kālacakra ceremony and consecrated in 1419 (Tucci 1949: 666, after 'Jigs med grags pa; Lo Bue 1992: 564, after *Myang chos 'byung*).
4. Mañjuśrī; manufactured in 1419, in one month and eight days (Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 20, after *Myang chos 'byung* 1983: 54, and 'Jigs med grags pa: 149–52).
5. Śākyamuni, consecrated in 1432.[12]

At least three of these were of much smaller sizes than the extant Gyantse *gos sku*.

STYLE AND ART HISTORICAL ASPECTS

From the Gyantse chronicle we learn that the actual master artist of at least one of the three principal banners still present in Gyantse was the Dpon mo che ("chief artist") Bsod nams dpal 'byor, who "in the Fire-Serpent year 1437 did the sketch of the great silken image of Maitreya, which was completed in the Earth-Sheep year 1439" ('Jigs med grags pa 1987: 241, 244).

Bsod nams dpal 'byor—the disciple and probably also the son of "the most honorable Dpal 'byor rin chen [or Rin chen dpal 'byor] of the blessed land of Gnas rnying, the king of painters"[13]—can be linked to some of the murals in the Sku 'bum, which he produced partly in cooperation with his teacher Rin chen dpal 'byor, who is himself credited

[12] Tucci 1949: 666 ('Jigs med grags pa: "representing a great figure of the Buddha").

[13] Inscription in the Mañjughoṣa chapel on the second storey of the Sku 'bum as reported by Tucci 1989, vol. IV.2: 181f.; Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 303; 'Jigs med grags pa 1987: 234.

with having made the sketch for a smaller Śākyamuni appliqué in Gyantse in 1418 and for a large *gos sku* at Gnas rnying in the 1420s (cf. Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 250, 303; Tucci 1989, vol. IV.2: 181f.; Jackson 1996: 111). This gifted monk-artist and "king of painters" also painted the superb Eighty Siddhas cycle in the Lam 'bras lha khang of the main temple in Gyantse, which has been dated to 1425 (Lo Bue and Ricca 1990: 413; Lo Bue 1992: 568, 571).

That master painters in Gyantse also were the leading "designers" of these silken scrolls may be suggested by stylistic criteria alone. A few characteristics of the fabric *thang ka*s analyzed in this article readily can be compared with the murals in the Gyantse Sku 'bum:

- proportions and drawing style of the figures,
- jewellery, garment and other textile adornments,
- the sumptuous flower design of the Maitreya banner, which is a distinctive element of the Gyantse painting style (cf. Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: pls. 11, 13, 31, 50, for example),
- the rainbow pattern outside Śākyamuni's *prabhā* (cf. Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: pls. 16,32; Xiong Wenbin 2001: pls. 157, 169, 192, 227),
- the characteristic Chinese clouds of the Maitreya and of the side-banner (cf. Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: pls. 70,79,82,107, for example).

Rin chen dpal 'byor and Bsod nams dpal 'byor were—according to the former's famous disciple of the following generation, Sman bla don grub (active ca. 1440–1470)—the most learned and experienced artists then working in Tibet (Jackson 1996: 108). Regrettably, no works attributable to Sman la don grub appear to have survived. This is particularly unfortunate as, according to tradition, he had a crucial encounter with a Buddhist painted scroll brought from China to Gnas rnying, which stimulated him to develop a new, Chinese-influenced landscape style in Tibetan painting—the important Sman ris school tradition. However, several distinctive Chinese elements already can be identified in the art of Gyantse at the time of his great teachers; the murals and statues in the Dpal khor chos sde, datable to the years 1418–1439, provide ample evidence of this.

The huge amount of silks brought to Tibet following the Tibetan missions to China, particularly between 1406 and 1417[14] not only contributed the precious material for the Gyantse appliqué banners, but

[14] See Karmay 1975: 75 and *passim*. A leading figure for those contacts between the early Ming emperors and the princes of Gyantse from 1368 was the Sa skya master Kun

also influenced their design. Clouds, rocks, dragons, Ming furniture elements or lattice work patterns and a rich repertoire of floral motifs document this aesthetic influence in both *gos sku* (colour plate 52).[15] It is questionable however, as to whether large woven or embroidered Tibeto-Chinese *thang ka*s, such as these, acted as forerunners or inspirational models for the Tibetan appliqué scroll, as has been suggested with regard to two Yongle period embroideries in the Lhasa Gtsug lag khang.[16] While large fabric *thang ka*s of this type may not have been produced in China or have been brought to Tibet before the Yongle Emperor's reign (1403–1424) and, specifically, before the meeting of Ming Chengzhu with the Fifth Karmapa in 1407, appliqué brocade scrolls, a typically Tibetan technique, already existed in Gyantse before 1400 (cf. the previous section).

The earliest documented large embroidered brocade *thang ka* was manufactured under the supervision of the Fourth Karmapa, Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340–1383), in the early 1360s in the north-eastern border area of Mi nyag, the territory of the former Tangut kingdom of Xixia, now in Gansu Province: "When the image-makers did not know how to do it, the Dharmasvamin [the Fourth Karmapa] himself laid out the outlines (of the image) with white pebbles on the slope of that mountain, and thus outlined a large image" of Śākyamuni flanked by the *bodhisattva*s Maitreya and Mañjuśrī.[17] The *Blue Annals* continue: "After this model 700 image-makers worked on the image for 13 months".

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dga' bkra shis rgyal mtshan (1349–1425), upon whom bestowed the Yongle emperor the title of "King of Mahāyāna Doctrine".

[15] A much wider range of Chinese floral and furniture patterns and ornamental vocabularly can be found in the Sku 'bum wall-paintings; see for example Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: pls. 36, 87, 92, 105–107.

[16] Reynolds 1999: 20. For the Yongle silk embroidery *thang ka*s, cf. Henss 1997.

[17] Roerich 1988: 505. The later whereabouts of this giant fabric *thang ka* are unknown. At the period when the *Blue Annals* were composed (1478) the banner was "preserved at Myang po", which probably has been confused with Nyang po in the border area of eastern Dbus and Rkong po. Cf. Wylie 1962: 96 and 176. According to Dpa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (16th century) soon after its consecration this *thang ka* was kept at Zho kha monastery in Upper Kongpo (east of modern Gyamda county, west of Brag gsum mtsho), while after a restoration under the Seventh Karmapa (1445–1506) the damaged upper part came to Rtse lha sgang in Middle Rkong po, west of Mount Bon ri (Tanaka 1994: 873, without geographical identification). In case this account does not refer only to the dream of the Mi nyag princess Punyadhari, the size of "eleven spans between the right and left ears" (of the Buddha) seems however to be a misinterpretation with regard to the Tibetan term for 'span' (*'dom*), which may correspond in this case to *khru* (1 *khru* = ca. 46 cm) rather than to *'dom* (ca. 160 cm) as written in the *Blue Annals*.

Textual evidence, as well as the few ancient silken images preserved suggest that the early tradition of monumental *gos sku thang ka*s was particularly related to and established in Gyantse. It is also likely that Gyantse acted as a centre from which leading painters such as Sman bla don grub were called to direct major projects in other places, such as Bkra shis lhun po, where a large Śākyamuni *gos sku*, measuring approximately 28 by 19 metres in size, and a Tārā cloth *thang ka* approximately 13 by 9 metres, were made in 1468 and 1469 respectively (Jackson 1996: 117f). Only rare examples of much smaller silken banners dating back to the 15th century have survived; one is an appliqué of a Medicine Buddha and two *bodhisattva*s in the Newark Museum.[18]

Although both the Śākyamuni and the Maitreya *gos sku* probably belong to the same original set of three *thang ka*s and may have been produced after a similar master design, it is likely that they were manufactured by different ateliers and artisans. The drawing style of the individual figures on the Maitreya *gos sku* is more refined and the colouring is brighter; the Chinese silks are more sumptuous and elaborate, and include more highly decorative embroidered brocades and various *lampas* weaves. In addition, the characteristic Gyantse-style flowers and clouds are missing on the Śākyamuni banner.

TECHNIQUE AND MATERIALS

Fabric *thang ka*s, in Tibetan texts and daily practice, are called *gos sku*, "cloth image", or *btags sku*, "woven image", and *gos thang*, "textile *thang ka*". The earliest examples of Tibetan-style fabric scrolls can be dated to around 1200 and are produced in a tapestry weave technique: *'thag 'drub ma* or *btags sku*, "woven image".

This method of tapestry weave originated in Central Asia and usually is labelled as *kesi* (or *kossu*), literally "engraved threads". It was used solely in China and the north-western border areas of the Xixia kingdom in the 12th and 13th century, though a regular cultural transfer from and to central Tibet is well documented. Thus, it is likely that the earliest textile images were manufactured either in a Tibetan style in a

[18] Newark Museum, Newark/New Jersey, USA; silk with embroidery, 211,5x186cm, TNM, Purchase 2000. Membership Endowment Fund 2000, 39. I have to thank Valrae Reynolds for these details.

Tibetan-Buddhist milieu in the Tibetan borderlands,[19] or in a Tibeto-Chinese style in the eastern Chinese ateliers of the later Song dynasty (cf. Henss 1997: fig. 1).

A specific tradition of highly refined silk tapestry images in a more or less authentic 'Tibetan style' was practised at the Mongol court during the Yuan dynasty between 1280 and 1330 partly for 'local' imperial use, and partly for Tibetan monasteries and dignitaries inside and outside Tibet.[20] During the Yuan dynasty, increasingly in its middle and later period, embroidered silks became more and more popular in China, which undoubtedly contributed to developments of deluxe forms of textile images often decorated with pearls and tapestry weaves more finely drawn.

These luxurious silk embroideries—in Tibetan *dar zab* (*dar*, 'silk') and *tshem 'drub ma* ('stitching' or 'embroidery')—were banned by imperial decree under the first Ming ruler. Fortunately, under the Yongle (1403–1424) and Xuande (1425–1435) periods they were again held in high esteem and the production of *thang ka*s in *kesi* technique also had a renaissance: large embroidered or uni-coloured gold thread silk banners and the most exquisite tapestry tableaux in a purely Tibetan style were produced in the imperial court ateliers.[21]

The available evidence suggests that the specific technique of appliqué silk brocade banners, *lhan 'drub* or *dras 'drub ma*, 'cloth-cut-out' (also *chan 'drub ma*, 'glued appliqué'), may be regarded as an indigenous Tibetan technique, while the basic materials—multi-coloured silk brocades and richly decorated embroidered silks—were imported from China. Figures and patterns were cut out of coloured silk fabrics and were stitched or glued as patchwork (*lhan 'drub* or *tshem tshem*) on the backing cloth. The usual, Tibetan term for giant appliqué

[19] See for example Reynolds 1996: pls. 7, 8. Monk-scholars, artists and works of art came from Tibet to the Tangut kingdom in the 12th and 13th century while refined tapestry weaves (*kesi*) and, later on, embroidered silk brocade *thang ka*s were brought from Xixia and China to Tibet. For references see for example: Roerich 1988: 486; Li Fanwen: The influence of Tibetan Buddhism on Xixia. Tibetan Studies, PIATS 1995. Proceedings of the Seventh Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, vol.II, Wien 1997: 559–572; Buddhist Pagodas of Western Xia (in Chinese), Beijing 1995, pls. 183, 250, 251, 276; E.Sperling: Lama to the King of Hsia. The Journal of the Tibetan Society Bloomington (USA) 1987: 31–47; Per K. Sørensen, G. Hazod, T. Gyalbo, *Rulers on the Celestial Plains. Ecclesiastic and Secular Gegemony in Medieval Tibet. A Study of Tshal Gung-thang*. Wien 2004: Part II, Appendix I.

[20] See for example Reynolds 1996: pl.9; Henss 1997: figs. 2, 3.

[21] See Henss 1997: figs. 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18.

silk banners, such as those preserved in the Dpal ’khor chos sde, is *gos sku chen mo*, ‘large silken image’. Particularly noteworthy in the case of the Maitreya *gos sku* in Gyantse is that elaborately designed Chinese silk embroideries with flowers, dragons and rocks were used, as were *lampas* weave sections with the hexagon and octagon grid lattice-work patterns characteristic of early Ming textiles.

The original protecting silk curtains (*thang theb*) have been preserved on some large embroidered silk *thang ka*s of the early Ming dynasty,[22] and on the giant appliqué scrolls—made or repaired in the 1980s and 1990s—at Gda’ ldan, ’Bras spungs, Se ra, Mtshur phu and Bkra shis lhun po—that some of the latter also possess protective covers or multi-coloured streamers. None of these is present on the Gyantse *gos sku*.

’Jigs med grags pa (1987: 234, 242f.) records several details on the measurements and proportions of the Gyantse *gos sku* designed and supervised by Dpon mo che Dpal ’byor rin chen and his pupils from Gnas rnying. For the Śākyamuni banner 41 bolts (*yug*; 1 *yug* being approximately 0.66m) of silk and another two bolts for the left and right border were used to cover the full width. While a total of 100 *yug* was estimated to be necessary for the whole *thang ka* including all ornamental and figurative work, another third was finally needed to complete the image.[23]

Quite precise measures are givenby the same author for the Maitreya: 51 *khru* (1 *khru*, ‘cubit’, being approximately 0.46m) for the height (ca. 23m) and 61 *khru* for the width (ca. 27.5m).[24] The size of the Maitreya figure alone is 42 *khru* (ca. 19m), while the seated Śākyamuni and Amitāyus are 9 *khru* (ca. 4m), the Buddhas of the Ten Directions 5 *khru* (ca. 2.3m) and the two masters on the upper border are 3 *khru* (ca. 1.35m) each in height. The width of the side-banners is 14 *khru* (ca. 6.4m).

[22] Three banners with the Yongle reign mark stored in the Lhasa Jokhang and representing: Cakrasaṃvara and Vajrabhairava (cf. Henss 1997: fig.9, 10), as well as another Vajrabhairava in silk brocade woven with the gold thread technique on a red monochromatic background.

[23] The individual silk bolts (*yug*) sewn together in vertical disposition can be clearly recognized in the upper portion of Śākyamuni’s body. 7 *yug* were needed for the head of the Buddha. For the sake of comparison: I should add that 1500 metres of silks were needed for the new Śākyamuni *gos sku* at Mtshur phu monastery (1992–1994); cf. Temple and Nguyen 1999: 2.

[24] My own measurements taken in 2001 of the Śākyamuni banner came to ca. 22.5x22.5m, and of the side-banner to ca. 22.5x5.5m. The total width was probably reduced when the right and left *lan dza* script borders of the Śākyamuni were removed.

The actual process of making such huge silken ‘painting’ from the first compositional drawing to the sewing and stitching of the appliqué forms and figures onto the supporting material, based on the use of traditional techniques within a contemporary setting would deserve a detailed documentation of its own.

Some information on this creative process has been afforded by the former master-tailor to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, ‘the Great Master of Clothes’ (*na bza’ chen mo*) Rgyal btsan rnam rgyal (b. 1912). In addition to making garments for the Tibetan hierarch and for Lhasa officials, tents for the nobility, and various other textile work, it is documented that he manufactured five giant *gos sku thang ka*s (cf. Rnam rgyal 1994 and Tanaka 1994: 875).

After a preparatory drawing of the whole composition, the master design (*bkod pa*, ‘the plan’, or *ri mo*, ‘design’) is drawn in the actual size of the final banner on single sheets of thick paper. With the help of a needle a stencil is made by perforating the design of each figure and ornament. By laying the stencil on the silk fabric the design is then dusted through the stencil onto the fabric leaving the composition’s outline on the silk. The powder dots are then connected with a continous line in order to draw the actual figure. However, a closer look at the face of the central Buddha of the Śākyamuni banner reveals a particularly interesting detail, a remnant of a different process: the partially preserved iconometric grid for the head with the remains of at least five horizontal lines between the eyebrows and the mouth, and of four diagonal lines reaching from the hair line to the chest.

The appliqué patterns are then attached (or glued) onto the backing material and finally stitched together. The few historical and modern accounts that comment on the technical production of these monumental banners indicate that a period of one to two years would have been needed to complete a *gos sku* such as those at Gyantse: 700 artisans worked for 13 months on the earliest recorded giant *thang ka* in the 1360s (no longer extant); the monumental *gos sku mthong grol chen mo* at Punakha, in Bhutan, was manufactured between 1689–1692 (Jackson 1996: 346), and work on the 35 by 23 metre Śākyamuni banner at Mtshur phu monastery took two full years from 1992 to 1994 (cf. Temple and Nguyen 1999). Much smaller appliqué *thang ka*s still required considerable productive effort, as exemplified by a Śākyamuni in Gyantse produced by 37 artisans in 27 days (1418) and by a silken image of Mañjuśrī, approximately one fifth the size of the two existing

Gyantse banners made in "one month and eight days" in 1419 (cf. Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 20).

The master plan and the detailed composition (*bkod pa*, *ri mo*) of a fabric *thang ka* was always made by a painter, and frequently renowned mural or painted scroll artists such as Rin chen dpal 'byor and Bsod nams dpal 'byor in Gnas rnying (before 1413) and Rgyal rtse (1418, 1437/39), or Sman bla don grub in Bkra shis lhun po (1468), who also were appointed to be the chief artist (*dpon mo che*) for those projects. Specialized artisans then performed the actual fabric work according to the *dpon mo che*'s plan. In later centuries these artisans belonged to the tailors' guild—which was established in Lhasa in the 17th century—and held an official rank higher than painters, gold- and coppersmiths.[25] This privileged position can be seen as indicative of the extraordinary value placed in Tibet on fabric *thang ka*s as compared with painted scrolls.

THE RITUAL OF DISPLAYING THE *GOS SKU*

In the fourth lunar month of the year 1438 a "great feast came round, which commemorates Śākyamuni's attainment of supreme enlightenment [*sa-ga zla ba*], the ritual of consecration was performed by the Sku zhang, the Chos rje Nam mkha' mchog grub dpal bzang po's chief disciple, that is by the Chos rje Phyogs las rnam rgyal…". Thus the inaugural ceremony of the Maitreya *gos sku* is described in the history of the Gyantse Princes by 'Jigs med grags pa (1987). The following description of the ritual of its public display, was recorded by me, 562 years after the consecration of this silken image. Because the damaged Dīpaṇkara *gos sku* is not displayed, the display of the Maitreya alternates annually within a two-year cycle with the Śākyamuni *gos sku*.

On the 9th of June of 2001 preparations began around four pm as every year in the Rgyal rtse gtsug lag khang with the opening of the heavy leather bags in which the *thang ka*s are kept throughout the year. Soon after 5 am the principal scroll and the side-banner were carried—mostly by young lay people—out of the assembly hall up to the *gos sku thang sa*, "the place for unfolding the silken image", where around 35

[25] The tailors' guild, which comprised about 130 government artisans, had its Lhasa headquarters—like the painters'—at Zhol (the quarter below the Potala Palace) and its main workshop in the Gtsug lag khang (after Phun tshogs Rnam rgyal 1994).

monks had gathered and were chanting *sutra* verses and blowing the long *dung chen* trumpets.

This huge ‘tower for displaying the cloth image’ (*gos sku spe’u*) inside the great enclosure wall built around the Dpal ’khor chos sde in 1425 probably was not erected before the 1430s, when the giant Gyantse banners were commissioned. This form of architectural ‘image support’ was constructed specifically for the display ritual. An earlier example of such *thang ka* walls still exists, albeit in ruined condition, at the nearby Rtse chen monastery (built 1366–1370). Besides the former *gos sku dpe* at Bsam yas (which, in its pre-1959 condition, was a 17th century reconstruction), the largest intact *thang ka* tower that has survived is at Bkra shis lhun po. This is approximately 32 metres in height and 42 metres in width (at the base) and was constructed in 1468 for the display of Sman bla don grub’s giant Buddha banner (circa 28 by 19 m). Apart from fulfilling a religious function, it also serves as a storage for drying yak meat. Most recently a huge image tower of this kind was erected at Se ra monastery, where—as at ’Bras spungs and other places—the banner had been until then displayed over a permanent scaffolding structure on the slopes ascending behind the monastic compound.

At places where large façades offer sufficient space for unfolding such fabric scrolls, the latter are shown as an outdoor image of the sacred shrine; this has occurred at Dga’ ldan (in Tsong kha pa’s mausoleum), at the Potala Palace and in the *dbu rtse* of Bhutanese *rdzong*s. When the Śākyamuni appliqué *thang ka* in Rgyal rtse was displayed in 1981 for the first time after the Cultural Revolution, it was unrolled at the front of the main assembly hall, covering the entire two-storeyed entrance façade only with its upper half.[26]

At a quarter to six am, when it was still dark, the *thang ka* procession arrived at the foot of the steeply inclined wall and the banner was fixed in its full upper width to a long metal pole. Shortly after six, fifteen laymen standing behind the façade at the top of the *gos sku spe’u* (plate 54) began to pull their precious load up. The image was then unrolled with the help of fifteen ropes in little more than five minutes.

[26] See for a photograph (of 1981) Rowell 1992: 145; Phun tshogs Rnam gyal 1994: 18; see also Der 14. Dalai Lama/G.Rowell, *Mein Tibet*, Frankfurt 1992, p. 145; *Tibet. The Roof of the World between Past and Present*, Boston 2000, p. 181. *Dbu rtse*, literally “highest or central summit”, is the central higher main building of a monastery or, as in Bhutan, the tower-like principal religious architecture within a governmental dis-

At a quarter past six, the side-banner was pulled up, fixed to another three ropes. All eighteen ropes slid over an equivalent number of wooden rolls in the top section of the tower and were handled by as many laymen lifting the silken scroll simultaneously.

Pilgrims performing their sacred *bskor ra* intra muros around the Dpal ’khor chos sde passed by the base of the *gos sku thang sa*, offering silken scarves and prostrating themselves to worship the silken image. Around ten, when the sun was about to rise over the upper ridge of the eastern hills, the sound of *dung chen* (‘long trumpets’) overwhelmed that of monks reciting prayers and the giant banner was let down. This took half an hour, and involved a procedure handled with considerably more care and time than the earlier process of unrolling. The *thang ka* was displayed for around four hours. Folding (not rolling!) the huge fabric *thang ka* to keep it safe for another two years is surprisingly complicated and requires a very professional expertise to avoid damage. One more hour was needed for packing and before noon the silken scroll had been carried back to the *gtsug lag khang*.

While on view for only a few hours to hundreds and thousands of pilgrims, this sacred icon of superhuman size and miraculous beauty has generated and radiated the transcendental presence and the blessing energy of the Awakened One in his manifestations of the Three Ages. With the exception of only a few most holy statues, such as that of the Jo bo Sakyamuni in Lhasa, no other images in Tibet had—by their physical presence as well as their spiritual quality as seen in a Tibetan perspective—a similar impact on our eyes and mind. To me, the silken paintings at Gyantse represent the very essence of Tibetan Buddhist art: to cause and to accumulate—as by ’Jigs med grags pa (1987) written about one of the fabric images in Gyantse—“great liberation through viewing” (*mthong grol chen mo*) “the Buddha, which as soon as created beings see it, frees from the pain of evil destinies”.

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I would to thank Dr Edwin Borman (Birmingham) for an improved reading of my English text and Prof. Erberto Lo Bue for his careful editing.

CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

*42. Śākyamuni *gos sku*, Gyantse Dpal ’khor chos sde, 1437/39m., appliqué silk brocade, ca. 22.5x22.5m. (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).
43. Avalokiteśvara, detail of Śākyamuni *gos sku* (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).
44. Sems dpa’ chen po chos kyi rin chen (13th century), abbot of Gnas rnying, detail of Śākyamuni *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).
45. ’Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan (1364–1422), abbot of Gnas rnying, detail of Śākyamuni *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).
46. Damaged silk brocades with inscriptions beneath on the backing cloth, detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).
*47. Maitreya *gos sku*, Gyantse Dpal ’khor chos sde, 1437/39, appliqué silk brocade, ca. 23x27 m. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).
*48. Avalokiteśvara, detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).
*49. Sems dpa’ chen po kyi rin chen (13th century), abbot of Gnas rnying, detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).
*50. Paṇ chen Śrī Śāriputra, abbot of Bodhgaya (in Gyantse in 1418), detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).
*51. Paṇ chen Śrī Śāriputra, abbot of Bodhgaya, Gyantse Dpal ’khor chos sde *gtsug lag khang*, Lam ’bras lha khang, wall painting, 1425. (Photo: M. Henss, 1990).
*52. Chinese embroidered silks and *lampas* weaves of early Ming dynasty, detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).
*53. Head of the central Buddha with traces of the original iconometric grid, detail of Śākyamuni *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).
54. Upper section of the *thang ka* wall in the Dpal ’khor chos sde seen from behind, while the *thang ka* is on display on the front-side (banners are pulled up and down from the upper gallery). (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).

NEW DISCOVERIES ABOUT THE LIFE OF CHOS DBYINGS RDO RJE, THE TENTH KARMA PA OF TIBET (1604–1674)

Irmgard Mengele

During the last years, a series of remarkable text discoveries has been made concerning the life of the great religious leader and artist, the Tenth Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674), who is the subject of my PhD dissertation. One of these rare sources, the most comprehensive biography of the Tenth Karma pa, was included in the old xylograph edition of the History of the Karma bka' brgyud School, which was recently traced by Mr Tashi Tsering in Rumtek, Sikkim. In the present paper I would like to explain some of the implications of that discovery.[1]

HISTORY OF THE KARMA BKA' BRGYUD SCHOOL

The two-volume *History of the Karma bka' brgyud School* is a collection of biographies of the most important figures of the Bka' brgyud lineage from the eleventh through the eighteenth century. *Zla ba* or *Zla phreng* are abbreviations of its full Tibetan title, *Bsgrub brgyud karma kam tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*. This most reliable historical work was compiled by two authors: (1) the great Tibetan scholar, the Eighth Situ Paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774), who wrote half of the first volume, and (2) his disciple 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab, who completed it in 1775, after the death of his master.

[1] Gene Smith kindly informed me that one xylograph of the *Zla phreng* forms part of the Migot collection in Paris. I am indebted to Prof. Anne Chayet for looking through the catalogue of the collection of André Migot, preserved at the library of the École française d'Etrême-Orient in Paris. On p. 9 of the catalogue published by the EFEO in 1987, the *Zla phreng* is listed as follows: Migot: T. 0517: *Bsgrub rgyud karma kam tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*, xyl., 341f. In order to find out whether it was the old or the expurgated version, I contacted the librarian, Mrs Christina Chamerotti, who gave me much support. But unfortunately the Migot: T. 0517 was missing, and we have not been able to check its contents.

Two editions are known. The first edition of the *Zla phreng* was printed in the Dpal spungs thub bstan chos ’khor gling monastery, forming volumes eleven and twelve of the collected works (*bka’ ’bum*) of the Si tu Paṇ chen (Si tu Paṇ chen Chos kyi ’byung gnas 1990). Dpal spungs was the biggest Bka’ brgyud monastery in the kingdom of Sde dge and was founded by the Eighth Si tu in 1727. The existence of this old edition was attested to by its usage by Khetsun Sangpo, who saw it and took notes from it in Rumtek, Sikkim, for his *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism* (Khetsun Sangpo 1977, vol. 7 and 1981, vol. 8).

The second edition was the basis for the modern publication from New Delhi in 1972 (Si tu and ’Be lo 1972). This new publication reproduced a print of the Dpal spungs edition, which the chief administrator (*dza sag*) of the Kun bde gling Bla brang had borrowed from the Nang chen chieftain Nam mkha’ rdo rje.[2] Gene Smith kindly informed me that the names of the publishers, “D. Gyaltsen and Kesang Legshay”, are most probably pseudonyms for Ngawang Lungtok and Ngawang Gyaltsen, two of the chief servants of the Kun bde gling dza sag. In the preface to the reprint of 1972, the publishers mention the condition of the xylograph as follows:

> Because of the quality of Nam-mkha’-rdo-rje’s print, it was not practicable to reproduce from the xylograph itself. Consequently, the task of tracing the original was assigned to monks of the Rgyud-smad Graw [Grwa]-tshang.
>
> On carefully checking against the original, we found some discrepencies [*sic*] in the tracing and inavoidably [*sic*] a correction sheet has to be appended in this volume.

THE TENTH KARMA PA’S BIOGRAPHY

For research on the life of the Tenth Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674), Si tu and ’Be lo’s history is an extremely significant source. In his preface to the second volume of the *Zla phreng*, Gene Smith noticed that the second version contained only a brief biography of the Tenth Karma pa. Considering the latter’s importance as a religious leader and marvellous artist, Smith perceptively noted:

[2] This information concerning the role of the Kun bde gling Dza sag was kindly given to me by Gene Smith in an e-mail message in 2002.

> The volume in hand is somewhat disappointing inasmuch as the treatment of the 10th Black Hat Karma-pa Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje (1604–1674) is so cursory. One wishes that 'Be-lo had chosen to include a summary of the life of this great lama and artist written by Gtsang Mkhan-chen (preface to Si tu and 'Be lo 1972: vol. 2).

At first I paid little attention to that shortcoming, since gTsang mkhan chen's biography was available to me (Gtsang Mkhan chen 'Jam dbyangs dpal ldan rgya mtsho 1982). But the picture became clearer when Mr Tashi Tsering from Dharamsala located the old xylograph, recognising it to be the original detailed biography of the Tenth Karma pa from the *Zla phreng*. Since this comprehensive life story of Chos dbyings rdo rje was missing in the version republished in 1972, there must have existed two versions of Si tu's history: one more complete, and the other a probably later expurgated version.

Why were there two versions of the *Zla phreng*? Did the blocks for the original detailed version get destroyed? Or were some blocks selectively removed or altered? Some inferences can be drawn from a comparison of the two versions. The first page of the original full version is marked on the margin *na zla ba brgya re gcig*, indicating its origin in volume twelve (*na*) of Si tu's collected works in the Dpal spungs edition. It also bears the short title *zla ba*, marking it as part of the two-volume history *Zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*, and the folio number is 161 (*brgya re gcig*). On page 161 of the new publication of 1972, one notices an obvious cut. The same sort of cut or break can be seen at the end of the short versified biography of the Tenth Karma pa, which was inserted to replace the longer life story. Hence the biography was deliberately removed. The 'cut edition' is also reproduced in Si tu's Collected Works (*bka' 'bum*) (Si tu Paṇ chen 1990).

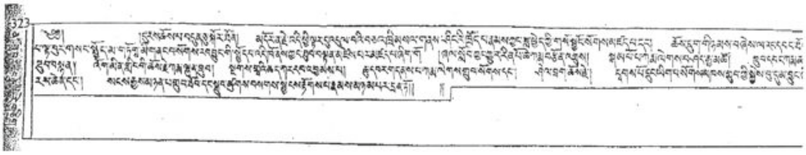


Fig. 8: Folio 161 in the *History of the Karma bka' brgyud School* (1972: vol. 2, p. 323)

Were any other biographies missing from the later version? When I searched through the two volumes for more deletions, to find out whether other biographies were missing, I failed to find any more exci-

sions. But I noticed that in the second volume of the 1972 reprint the life story of the Sixth Rgyal tshab was missing, though the biographies of the Third to the Fifth and the Seventh Rgyal tshab were present. Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche had used the old Dpal-spungs edition, preserved at the Rumtek monastery in Sikkim, for his presentation of the Bka' brgyud pa tradition summarised in volumes seven to nine of his *Biographical Dictionary* (Khetsun Sangpo 1981: vol. 9, 26–27). In vol. 9, p. 26, he mentions the following as source for his brief life-story of the Sixth rGyal-tshab: *na zla ba* 290 [190b], line 2. This proves that this biographical information was removed in the later version, too.[3]

Why would certain biographies have been cut? One can only assume that the main motive for their removal may have been connected with power struggles of seventeenth-century Tibet, though long after the events. Until the early 1640s, the Karma bka' brgyud lineage had been the most prominent school of Tibetan Buddhism, supported by the powerful king of Gtsang, Karma bstan skyong (1606–1642). But after the defeat of the king in 1642 by the Mongol army of Gushri Khan, who came as a supporter of the Dge lugs pa school, the school was suppressed and went into a long decline. Though the Tenth Karma pa did not take part in that struggle for political power, he was wrongly implicated. He was attacked and barely managed to escape with his life, fleeing on foot to the far east to Lijiang, beyond direct Mongol control and a long-time haven for the Karma bka' brgyud tradition. All Tibetan biographers state that Chos dbyings rdo rje led the exemplary life of a Bodhisattva, taking no interest in riches and fame, but full of love and compassion for all sentient beings, especially the most miserable ones. Gtsang Mkhan chen 'Jam dbyangs dpal ldan rgya mtsho (1610–1684) concluded in his biography of Chos dbyings rdo rje:

> About such a king of holy people it can only be said that he has the fault of being in contradiction with the world. But no enemy or friend can accuse him of being in contradiction with the *dharma*.[4]

This dignified Tenth bearer of the Karma bka' brgyud hat, who was also a marvellous artist, gifted poet and musician, had become a victim of political events. One assumes that his and the other biography had

[3] The page number 290 is incorrect. There is a short biographical sketch, comprising six lines, on page 190b.

[4] We are very grateful to David Jackson for having taken the initiative to make this list available to us.

been removed to avoid offending Dge lugs pa sensibilities, because it portrayed the events of the 1640s in a way that did not glorify the Mongols or their Tibetan protégés, the Dga' ldan pho brang regime.

A second possibility, which is far less plausible for the suppression of the biography of the Tenth Karma pa and that of the Sixth Rgyal tshab Nor bu bzang po (1659–1698), was that they report the Karma pa having one or more children. The Fifth Dalai Lama reports in his autobiography that the Karma pa had long hair, wore upper-Hor garments and had a wife and children in 'Jang yul. In 1662, the Karma pa recognised one of his sons as the incarnation of the Fifth Rgyal tshab. Some of the Karma pa's contemporary critics had already taken offence at his breaking his monk's vows. Could the editor of the expurgated version have tried to protect the reputation of the Karma bka' brgyud tradition? This seems far-fetched for it would have been much easier to delete a few lines than two entire works.



Fig. 9: The 10th Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje. Modern drawing by Pema Rinzin, Japan 2002. Japanese ink on paper. Original size 30 x 40 cm. (Private collection I. Mengele)

When were the Dpal spungs woodblocks altered to make the expurgated version? The biographies may have been removed from the older edition during one of the times when Sde dge, situated east of the 'Bri chu, lost its status as independent kingdom and was controlled by the Lhasa government.

Until 1911, the 'Bri chu (Yangtse) divided Khams into two parts. The part west of the river was administrated by the Lhasa government and the principalities east of it, including Sde dge, were ruled by local authorities (Kolmaš 1968: 21). Two periods come into consideration: (1) In 1865, after the Nyag rong war, Lhasa generals were posted in Sde dge and in other eastern kingdoms (Smith 2001: chap. 17, 249). After this interim period of administration from Lhasa, independence was restored. (2) After a period of Chinese occupation from 1908–1918, the Tibetan troops from Lhasa recaptured Chamdo and Sde dge, which remained under Tibetan rule until 1932. On October 10, 1932, the Chinese general Liu Wen hui and the Tibetan leaders in Khams signed a truce under which the Tibetan forces would remain west of the Yangtse river and the Chinese would remain to its east. The river remained the *de facto* border between Tibet and China until 1950 (Goldstein 1993: 221–24).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present sources are not sufficient to clarify why and when Si tu and 'Be lo's history was expurgated. Except for Khra 'gu Rin po che, the learned lamas of the tradition seem unaware of the problem. Perhaps one of the monks from Dpal spungs will one day be able to clarify things through received oral tradition.

Concerning the content of this newly discovered source, much of it will be included in my version of the Tenth Karma pa's life story, which I hope to present at the University of Hamburg as a dissertation by this year.

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THE SCARCELY KNOWN TEMPLE OF MAṆI LHA KHANG, DECHEN COUNTY, CENTRAL TIBET: A POSSIBLE BKA' GDAMS PA FOUNDATION?

GABRIELLE YABLONSKY

1. LOCATION[1] AND HISTORY

The temple called Maṇi Lha khang by the local population is located near the Lhasa-Sichuan Highway before reaching Ganden and shortly after the turnoff to Tshalgungthang Monastery. The nearby mountains to the east, as well as the valley in which the temple is located, are called Balam,[2] while the mountains to the south are called Lango (Glang sgo). On the route to Maṇi Lha khang, which is situated approximately seven miles south of the highway, one passes three villages, the last of which, named Ringa (Rigs lnga), lies across a small stream from the temple, which is accessed by a bridge (plate 55).

Entry to the temple is gained by a door (usually kept locked) in the small walled courtyard in front of the temple (plate 56). On the left side of the inner courtyard is another door opening into a storage room, while the front wall of the shallow porch is pierced by two doors, one to the right leading to a tiny room containing numerous miniature clay figures (*tsha tsha*), and the other, to the left, opening into a somewhat

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[1] I thank Guntram Hazod and Guge Tshering Gyelpo for their assistance in locating this temple. The fieldwork for this article was undertaken in 2001 and 2002.

[2] Hazod 2003: 34, citing Uebach concerning Balam Lag (or Lag Balam) as a dynastic place of early kings, identifies Balam as a valley to the east of Tagtse, including the two valleys of Balam Shar and Balam Nup. Lag (Glag), however, is a name which is today forgotten. Hazod notes that the temple is actually situated in the upper part of Balam Shar. Though Uebach (1988: 506) does not mention Maṇi Lha khang, specifically, she notes that Balam and its monasteries are cited in a manuscript by Sde srid San ryas rgya mcho as being included in the region of Kyi Lag located in the Kyichu Valley east of Lhasa on the left bank of the Kyichu River. Balam and the passes of its surrounding mountains also lay on the main route to Brag mar, the residence of kings in the 7th to 8th centuries who were named Lags pa after the region they settled. Though the annals of these early kings do not mention Balam as connected with a particular region, in fact, the bodies of deceased kings were first brought to Balam Lag, then to Bragmar on the main highway leading to the Tsang po River, where ferries transported their bodies to Phyin ba in the Yarlung Valley (Uebach 1988: 509).

larger, albeit still small room, the walls of which are adorned with paintings.[3] The two rooms are each dominated by an immense *mani* wheel, hence the name of the temple.

Sherab Yontan, the monk in charge of the lhakhang in 2002, was born in 1945, and was affiliated with Ganden Monastery as a novice, but was forced to marry by the Communists. Since he was the only monk in the area, he was placed in charge of the temple shortly after part of the building was rebuilt in 1985. The villagers, who know little of its history, still support the temple financially, since nowadays it is no longer affiliated with any monastery. Prior to 1959, however, the temple was attached to Ganden Monastery, and from 1930 to the 1940s it was owned by the Mindupu (Rmin drug spug) family, a somewhat powerful family of the fourth-grade level of officialdom, perhaps at the level of a *bka'blon* or *mgo zhabs* (?) in Lhasa in the 1930s.[4] When the family's fortunes declined in the 1940s, the family was forced to sell the temple. According to Sherab Yontan, the temple is said to have had a history of one thousand years, and to have been founded at the time of the famed storyteller, Agu Tomba, though the monk admitted he was unsure when the storyteller lived. In fact the temple, or at least the foundation, is in all probability ancient, since it lies near an old trade route that went from Dechen (Dagze) Dzong in the neighboring valley of Tagtse through Shingjang to Samye and thence to Monyul (the modern Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan).[5] Moreover, another temple in the vicinity, the Balam Shatsa Temple (also called Lag Balampa) was erect-

[3] The extreme darkness of this room due to the small entryway, coupled with the fact that the wall paintings appear to have been heavily varnished, makes photography of the paintings exceedingly difficult.

[4] Information concerning the history of the temple was kindly provided by Lama Sherab Yontan.

[5] I have not traversed this route to Samye, though the map may be seen in Chan (1994: 626). Regarding the ancient Balam Valley's connection with Samye, the path from Balam to Samye was known in ancient history, since it was traversed by Vairocana, Śāntarakṣita and the legendary Padmasambhava. Moreover, Basenang (Sba gsal snang), an important supporter of Buddhism in the period of Samye's foundation, made his home in Balam (see Hazod 2003: 34). Hazod (*ibid.*) also notes that the place name of Balam may have originally derived from Basenang's Ba (Sba) clan, but was later interpreted to mean "cowpath," while the other ancient place name of "Lag" was subsequently taken to mean "dead cow", in accordance with the story concerning Vairocana, the smithy and the smith's wife.

ed by Klu mes (Klag Pa lam pa) in the 11th century; and thus the original foundation of Maṇi Lha khang may also date from this period.[6]

More recently, extensive repairs were made to the temple. The smaller room was totally renovated in 1985 due to damage suffered during the Cultural Revolution; and its walls still remain devoid of decoration. The back wall of the larger room was also rebuilt, but at an earlier time, about 1930, when it was bought by the Mindupu family. To the best of my knowledge there is no library associated with this temple; thus we have no ritual manual concerned with a particular lineage which could provide descriptions of the wall paintings,[7] or which could furnish information regarding patrons who might have commissioned the paintings.

The fact that the back wall (opposite the entrance) was repainted with such figures and deities (outlined on a uniformly red background) as Padmasambhava and Avalokiteśvara, whereas Tsongkhapa is not represented, would lead one to believe that in 1930 there was no evidence that the temple was Dge lugs pa, although a photograph of the current Dalai Lama is prominently displayed on the altar to the rear of the temple. The remaining walls depict primarily the tranquil and fierce deities of the *chos nyid*, or second state of *bar do*, in which symbolic visions (first of the peaceful deities and later of these same deities in a wrathful state) appear to the deceased. However, not only are major deities particularly cherished by the Rnying ma tradition depicted, such as Hayagrīva, but portraits of the luminaries of the Bka' gdams order, Atisha and his two famed disciples, 'Brom ston and Legs pa' i shes rab, are also portrayed in the Maṇi Lha khang. Since Avalokiteśvara was a favored deity of the Bka' gdams order (Rhie and Thurman 1991: 26), and since the 5th Dalai Lama was regarded as a manifestation of that deity, it is appropriate that Avalokiteśvara is represented on the back wall of the temple. It is also fitting that Padmasambhava is represented

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6 Hazod (*ibid.*), citing Szerb and Roerich, notes a possible link between the foundation of Maṇi Lha khang and the Balam Shatsa Temple. It is notable that Klu mes bears the alternative name of Klag Pa lam pa (Uebach 1988: 509), and that Lag Balampa, as the alternative name of the Balam Shatsa Temple, identifies that temple with the dynastic region of Kyi Lag.

7 However, Professor Lopsang Tashi of Tibet University is of the opinion that these paintings follow the Nyingthik (*snying thig*) traditions of Dzokchen developed by the 14th-century scholar, Longchenpa (personal communication, L. Tashi, 2002). See Cuevas (2003: 66–67 and chapter 10) concerning Longchenpa and the various transmission lineages in Central Tibet connected with him.

here, since, apart from the deified status accorded him by the Rnying ma order, he is viewed as the concealer and prophesier of the later revelation of the literary cycle, *The Peaceful and Wrathful Deities*.[8] As will be seen, both Avalokiteśvara and Padmasambhava are again featured on the side wall of the temple, amongst the peaceful deities of the *bar do*. Before discussing the possible reasons for the iconographic program in the Maṇi Lha khang, I shall discuss (proceeding clockwise from a viewpoint inside the temple) the subjects, style and possible date of the works represented in older paintings, as seen on the front entrance wall and on the two side walls of the temple.

2. PAINTINGS OF THE ENTRANCE WALL ON THE LEFT OF THE DOORWAY

The narrow interior wall on the left of the doorway depicts Hayagrīva in his most basic (non-tantric) form with one head adorned with a diadem of skulls, two legs stepping to the right on a lotus base and two arms holding a noose and upraised sword. Thus, despite the presence of Atiśa's portrait in the temple paintings, the special form of Hayagrīva having three heads, four arms and four legs with demons underfoot, said to have been invoked by Atiśa (Getty 1988: 163), is not represented here. A horse's head is clearly displayed in the tousled locks of Hayagrīva, who wears a snake around his neck and a tiger skin about his waist from which dangle numerous human heads. Although Hayagrīva's consort is not represented here, it may be that Hayagrīva is placed near the door of the temple because, together with his consort, he is one of the four directional door-keeper deities of the *bar do*, the guardian of the west direction (Trungpa and Fremantle 1975: 23).

Above Hayagrīva stand three crowned figures of Amitāyus. The larger one, in the center, is flanked by two smaller ones exactly the same. They are coiffed in a peculiar *stupa*-like coiled hairdo[9] and are elaborately dressed in *bodhisattva* raiments and ornaments. However, the round bowl each holds in *samādhi mudrā* appears more like a beg-

[8] These texts were "revealed" six centuries later (in the 14th century) by the treasure revealer, *gter ston* Karma Lingpa of Dakpo, southeastern Tibet. See Cuevas (2003: 16–17), concerning Karma Lingpa's life and literary works known as the *Kar ling zhi khro*, part of which is entitled *The Self-Liberated Wisdom of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities*, abbreviated as *The Peaceful and Wrathful Deities*.

[9] This hairstyle in connection with Amitāyus is noted by Getty 1988: 39.

ging bowl than the *tshe'bum* (ambrosia vase) the deity typically holds. Also unusual is the standing pose[10] of these figures.

3. WALL OF THE FORTY-TWO TRANQUIL DEITIES[11] (PAINTINGS OF THE SIDE WALL ON THE LEFT OF THE ENTRANCE WALL)

The side wall on the left of the paintings of Hayagrīva and Amitāyus displays, along the very top of the wall, a frieze of the Thirty-five Buddhas of Confession, below which are primarily represented the peaceful deities of the *bar do*.[12] The seated image of the white Vairocana in *bodhisattva* garments, together with his consort, dominates the center of the wall. On Vairocana's left are five single dancing *ḍākinī*s and on his right are five crowned deities clad in tiger skins, who dance together with their consorts dressed in leopard skirts. The dancing figures assume quite energetic and frenzied poses, the expressionistic linear treatment of both Vairocana and the dancers giving an almost caricature-like appearance to the figures. Presumably the five single *ḍākinī*s represent the five "wisdom goddesses", who correspond to the five cosmic Buddhas and *bodhisattva*s, that is the Buddha, Vajra, Ratna, Padma and Karma *ḍākinī*s,[13] while the dancing couples probably represent the five Knowledge-holding deities, forms of the five Cosmic Buddhas.[14] The Knowledge-holding deities (forms of

[10] Concerning this pose, see Getty, *ibid*.

[11] In the text of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975), only the five Buddhas with their accompanying consorts and *bodhisattva*s; the four wrathful male and four protective female gatekeepers; the six sages of the six realms; the four directional forms of Vidyādhara (Lord of the Dance) and their *ḍākinī*s; and also a number of other *ḍākinī*s, make their appearance. No mention in the text is made of specific masters, such as Hūṃkāra, or the goddess, Lha mo, in her form as Dpal ldan dmag zor rgyal mo, as shown in the wall paintings in the Maṇi Lha khang. These additional deities depicted in the Maṇi Lha khang may represent local traditions.

[12] I am indebted to Professor Lopsang Tashi for his kind assistance in identifying certain deities depicted on this wall.

[13] See Das 1979: 180 and Getty 1988: 119.

[14] Of the single *ḍākinī*s, one is green and the others are a lighter reddish or yellowish colour, though it is difficult to discern the original colours due to layers of darkened varnish. Similarly, the original colours of the Knowledge-holding deities have also faded. They are normally represented in the five colours of their respective Buddha families, according to Gordon (1978: 98), though in the *thang ka* of the *chos nyid bar do* pictured by Rhie and Thurman (1991: 198, pl. 60), a second reddish deity in *yab yum* is substituted for the blue-coloured deity and his consort.

Vidyādhara)[15] are the last to appear to the deceased (on the seventh day), just before the wrathful deities make their appearance on the eighth day (Gordon 1978: 98).

Directly above Vairocana and just below the center ceiling beam of the temple is the peaceful primordial Buddha (Ādi-Buddha) Samantabhadra, likewise in *yab yum* pose with his white wisdom consort Samantabhadri. He is enclosed on his right by Avalokiteśvara and on his left, by Amitābha. These latter two deities are in turn surrounded by the six Buddhas of the six *lokas* (transmigratory realms), three surrounding each deity, one above and two on either side. Two lamas are also represented here: on Amitābha's left (higher up on the wall) is Padmasambhava, and on Avalokiteśvara's right (towards the top of the wall) is possibly Hūṃkāra, the Nepalese master named after the wrathful deity Hūṃkāra, who was the object of this guru's lengthy meditation exercises (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: 475).

At each end of the wall are two representations in *yab yum* of Vajrasattva,[16] one above the other, in the four colour directional families of yellow, blue, red and green.[17] Around each of the four Vajrasattva figures in *yab yum* is a retinue of four seated female goddesses, sixteen in all, each having one head and two arms. Also present are various seated images of Tār Hūṃkāra, likewise having one head and two arms. Contrasting with these peaceful divinties is the fearful goddess, Dpal ldan dmag zor rgyal mo, a form of Dpal ldan Lha mo, who is situated on the lower part of the wall adjacent to the blue-coloured Vajrasattva and his retinue. This dark blue goddess with straw-coloured hair, who carries a sack of diseases and a skull filled with a child's blood, is armed with a club with which she threatens oath-breakers.[18]

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[15] In the commentary to the text of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 24), Vidyādhara is described as a "majestic", intermediary god, neither peaceful nor wrathful, but a transitional figure between the worlds of the tranquil deities and the wrathful deities.

[16] Vajrasattva's position in the Mahayana pantheon is unclear. In some Buddhist texts he is regarded as a *bodhisattva*, in others as a Buddha.

[17] In examples of *thang ka* paintings illustrated by Gordon (1978: 97–100) and by Rhie and Thurman (1991: 198), the *mandalas* of four Transcendent Buddhas and their consorts (in addition to Vairocana and his *prajña*) are shown instead of Vajrasattva in the four colour directional families seen at Maṇi Lha khang.

[18] See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 24–26. The statement by Nebesky-Wojkowitz that the goddess derives her name from the sickle (*zor*) as her principal attribute has been challenged by Lokesh Chandra 1991: 336, pl. 899. In descriptions by other scholars, the sickle is not mentioned as her principal attribute.

4. WALL OF THE FIFTY-EIGHT WRATHFUL DEITIES[19] (PAINTINGS OF THE OPPOSITE SIDE WALL)

Ranged along the very top of the opposite side wall of the temple, is a continuation of the frieze of the Thirty-five Buddhas of Confession. Below are displayed the fierce deities of the *bar do*, especially remarkable for the variety and vigor, yet delicate contouring, of the animal-headed goddesses and wrathful female deities represented. For ease of discussion this wall may be viewed as two sections divided at the top by the central ceiling beam of the temple, although the scene is continuous. One section (part A) is adjacent to the back wall, and the other half of the wall (part B) is adjacent to the entry wall of the temple. Both sections contain three winged Heruka Buddhas in *yab yum*, each Heruka Buddha having three heads, six arms and six legs. In *thang ka* paintings of the Fierce and Tranquil Deities of the *Bar do*, the counterpart or wrathful form of the peaceful Samantabhadra is the reddish-brown "Glorious Great Heruka Buddha", a heroic enlightened male deity, who dominates the painting by his larger size and central placement.[20] In such paintings he is normally surrounded by five smaller Heruka Buddhas, together with their consorts, in yellow (Ratnaheruka), red (Padmaheruka), green (Karmaheruka), red-brown (Buddhaheruka) and blue (Vajraheruka),[21] with the red-brown Buddhaheruka directly below him. In the Maṇi Lha khang, however, the Heruka Buddhas are nearly the same size; and also their placement differs in sections A and B of the wall. The red Padmaheruka takes center stage in section A of the wall; but in section B, Vajraheruka (plate 57) occupies the center of the wall.

Similar in size to the Heruka Buddhas is another winged deity in *yab yum* pose, a blue-coloured three-headed figure of Heruka Kīla (plate 58),[22] which is situated on the lower part of the wall beneath the tem-

[19] These include, principally, the Herukas and their consorts, the *gaurī*s (eight fierce cemetery goddesses), the *piśācī*s (eight animal- and bird-headed flesh-eaters), four animal-headed gate goddesses, twenty-eight animal- and bird-headed *dbang phyug ma* (power goddesses), and four animal-and bird-headed *yoginī* gate guardians.

[20] See illustration in Rhie and Thurman 1991: 198, pl. 60.

[21] See Gordon (1978: 99) and Rhie and Thurman (1991: 198). The latter two scholars call the central Heruka "Chemchok Heruka." According to Fremantle and Trungpa (1975: 25–26), the central Buddha Heruka is a combination of Buddha Heruka and the Great Heruka, who is the originator of the five Buddha families, but is not connected with any of the families, since he is the "space in between" them.

[22] This deity does not appear in the *thang ka* illustrated by Gordon (*ibid.*) or by Rhie

ple ceiling beam, so that the deity's figure divides the wall into sections A and B. The lowest two of his six hands hold a large *phur pa* (magic dagger) in front of his green-coloured consort; and three of his other hands hold a *vajra* and a ritual wand (khaṭvāga) topped with heads and skulls, which complements his skull diadem and the human heads hanging from his tiger-skin skirt. Two hapless humans, symbolic of subjugated gods of ignorance (Rhie and Thurman 1991: 197), lie trampled beneath his three pairs of feet.

Finally, there remain four additional large wrathful deities in *yab yum*, one at each corner of the wall, though these four are without wings. The two figures in the upper and lower corners of section B of the wall (towards the entrance of the temple) are quite damaged, particularly the upper corner figure. The figure in the lower corner of section B appears to be green, while the other two deities in the upper and lower corners of section A of the wall (towards the back wall of the temple) are whitish or yellowish; therefore the four figures may represent the fierce *yab yum* Herukas, according to the terminology employed by Rhie and Thurman (1991: 198).[23] Regarding the much

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and Thurman (*ibid.*). Since he merely holds a dagger, he is to be distinguished from *kīla* dagger deities whose lower extremities terminate in a dagger (see illustrations in Rhie and Thurman 1991: 196–97).

[23] Gordon (1978: 98–100), however, calls such figures "door-keepers of the four directions," including Vijayā and his *prajñā*, doorkeeper of the east; Hayagrīva and his *prajñā*, doorkeeper of the west, as previously mentioned; Amṛṭadhara (a form of Amitābha) and his *prajñā*, the north doorkeeper; and Yamāntaka and his *prajñā*, the south doorkeeper. According to the colours of these deities as indicated in the *thang ka* pictured by Rhie and Thurman (1991: 198, pl. 60), these would correspond, respectively, to the deities pictured at Maṇi Lha khang in the lower corner of the wall, section B; the upper corner of the wall, section B; the lower corner of the wall, section A; and the upper corner of the wall, section A. The *thang ka* illustrated by Gordon (1978: 100 and facing page 100), is not shown in colour, but the colours of some of these deities (Hayagrīva and Yamāntaka, for example), as indicated elsewhere in Gordon (1978: 90–91), and also in Getty (1988: 162 and 164), do not seem to correspond to the colours of the deities pictured in the *thang ka* illustrated by Rhie and Thurman, or to the colours of the deities pictured on the wall of the fierce deities at Maṇi Lha khang. However, due to the faded colours and the partial destruction of the corner figures on section B of the wall, one cannot be certain what the original colours of two of these four deities at Maṇi Lha khang were. If these are the "fierce *yab yum* Herukas," as Rhie and Thurman (*ibid.*) call them, then it is perfectly logical that at Maṇi Lha khang these deities are shown on the wall depicting the wrathful deities, unlike scroll paintings, where they are represented in the upper part of the scroll amidst the peaceful deities. If these deities are, on the other hand, the "door-keepers of the four directions," in Gordon's terminology, then they may be represented in *thang ka* paintings amidst the peaceful deities because they are shown to the deceased on the sixth day, before the arrival of the wrathful deities, although, paradoxically, the door-keepers are themselves wrathful deities.

smaller animal- and human-headed deities, a comparison between the paintings at Maṇi Lha khang and *thang ka* paintings of the *chos nyid bar do* shows that the arrangement of the smaller deities in the wall paintings also does not exactly correspond to their arrangement in *thang ka* paintings. In the latter, twenty-four of the twenty-eight *dbang phyug ma* (animal-headed female power deities of the four directions) are typically disposed in four circles, each circle containing six deities, with the four remaining *dbang phyug ma* serving as doorkeepers or protectors outside the circles. At Maṇi Lha khang, however, eight single female animal-headed deities are seen within their individual circles. Four such circles, enclosing a sow, goat, tiger, and a bird with a very large hooked beak, are found at one end of the wall (in section A). The goat-headed power goddess (colour plate 59), named the yellow *vajra*, holds a noose, and is one of the four *yoginī* gate guardians (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 67). At the other end of this wall (in section B) are four additional circles. Two enclose a lion; and the other two enclose snakes.[24] Presumably there are eight circles in all rather than only four, because four correspond to the four *vajra* power deities as part of the *dbang phyug ma* group mentioned in the text of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 66–67); and four correspond to a different group of four gate guardians, who are not part of the *dbang phyug ma* group. According to the text, the former group includes the cuckoo-, goat-, lion-and serpent-headed goddesses, who carry a hook, noose, chain and bell, respectively; and the latter group includes the tiger-headed Aṅkuśā with goad, the sow-headed Pāśā armed with a noose, the lion-headed Śṛṇkhalā armed with a chain and the green-headed Ghaṇṭā provided with a warning bell, all implements intended to prevent the deceased's escape from the *bar do* state.[25]

[24] In addition to snake-headed deities, other deities with reptile heads, such as those with heads of "sea-monsters", are mentioned in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (see the description of Santi or Peace, the goddess who holds a vase, in Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 66). Presumably, these deities correspond to those with *makara* (crocodile) heads pictured on the wall of wrathful deities at Maṇi Lha khang.

[25] Regarding the somewhat confusing terminology used by art historians regarding these deities, Gordon (1978: 99), distinguishes between three groups of deities: firstly, the "Four Yoginis of the Door" (part of the twenty-eight animal-headed *dbang phyug ma* deities); secondly, the previously discussed deities in *yab yum* with wrathful miens called the "Door-keepers of the Four Directions"; and, thirdly, the group which she terms the "Four Female Doorkeepers" (Gordon: 1978: 98), who are also animal-headed, but not part of the *dbang phyug ma* group. Rhie and Thurman (1991: 198) distinguish between four "animal-headed protectors" surrounding a central Heruka (in *thang*

Outside the eight circles may be seen various bird-headed deities, including (according to Tibetan informants) a raven, eagle, falcon and perhaps a parrot, as well as a crane-like deity[26] with an extremely long beak, who shoots a bow and arrow. Its beak, however, is far longer than that of the hoopoe, which is the bird designated as the power *yoginī* of the west direction (the Goddess, Kama, or Desire) in the text of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 67), and the only bird-headed goddess armed with bow and arrow, according to the text. Additional bird-headed goddesses of the *dbang phyug ma* power group mentioned in the text[27] include the vulture, hawk, crow, cuckoo and the mythological *garuḍa*. Some of these same bird deities—the vulture and hawk, as well as the raven and owl, are assigned in the text to another group of female goddesses, the eight flesh-eating *piśācī*s or *phra men ma* ("striped" or "variegated") goddesses, who haunt holy places.[28] Among these, the raven (colour plate 60), named Kaṇkamukhā of the northwest direction, is armed with a sword, and is described as "eating a heart and lungs" (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 65).

Also positioned outside the deities enclosed in circles are female animal-headed deities, numbering perhaps as many as twenty different types, including a leopard, *makara* (sea monster),[29] tiger, lion, fox, monkey, deer, snake, yak and a wolf, though it is quite difficult to identify with certainty some of these animals as depicted in the wall paintings. The wine-coloured lion-headed goddess called Siṅhamukhā of the east direction[30] is one of the eight flesh-eating *piśācī*s, and is depicted in the Maṇi Lha khang in the act of biting a corpse (plate 61). Though there are several types of serpent deities, one type, portrayed in the Maṇi Lha khang, holds a lotus flower. She is the power goddess of the

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ka paintings), and four different animal-headed protectors outside the four circles (at the bottom of the *thang ka*), who are part of the *dbang phyug ma* group. These latter thus correspond to Gordon's "Four Yoginis of the Door".

[26] Crane-like or heron-like birds are mentioned as scavengers in 'sky burials', though these are said to have a white head and dark back (Cuevas: 2003: 38), in contrast to the striped birds depicted in the Maṇi Lha khang. In fact, neither cranes nor parrots are mentioned as being among the bird-headed deities cited in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* as translated by Fremantle and Trungpa, 1975.

[27] Fremantle and Trungpa (1975: 66–67).

[28] *Ibid.*, 63 and 65.

[29] Gordon (1978: facing page 101), names this deity the "Red Makara-Headed peaceful goddess".

[30] Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 65.

east direction, named the orange Brahmī[31] (plate 62). A more difficult animal to identify in the Maṇi Lha khang is one that appears to be a wolf, though its square muzzle led some artist-informants to identify it as a dog. However, because of the flag which the wolf-headed goddess holds (colour plate 60) the deity may perhaps be the blue wind goddess from the north called Vāyudevī.[32]

A number of animal-headed goddesses, such as the lion, tiger, wolf fox and snake are found in several different sub-groups of wrathful deities, according to the text of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 65–67);[33] but the monkey-headed goddess cited above as appearing in the Maṇi Lha khang is not found in any of them. Thus it is possible that the artists indulged in creative license; that there could have been more than one version of the text; or that the artists were not entirely familiar with the text, since there are also other discrepancies between the actual paintings and the descriptions of the deities in the text. Artistic license could certainly have been justified, since the text of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* states that a vast host of wrathful deities "will come filling the whole universe" (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 69). These animal-headed goddesses carry tantric implements or symbolic weaponry, such as axes, knives, nooses, clubs, tridents, *vajra*, *ghaṇṭa*, elephant goads, staves, chains, wheels and bows and arrows. Especially charming and skillfully represented is the green scorpion-headed power deity[34] (colour plate 59). This depiction is puzzling since the only reference to such a deity in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1975: 66) concerns the goddess Amṛta, who has a red-coloured scorpion head.

Among the animal-headed deities depicted in the Mani Lhkahang, are the eight flesh-eating *ḍākinī*s (the *piśācī*s), who, like the bird-headed members of the group of eight, grasp human corpses or body parts

[31] *Ibid*., 66.

[32] *Ibid*., 67.

[33] Thus lion- and tiger-headed deities appear among the *piśācī*s and the goddesses of the gates (not in the *dbang phyug ma* group), while the tiger-headed deity alone appears among the *dbang phyug ma*; the dark blue wolf-headed deity and the black fox-headed goddess are seen among the *piśācī*s, but the dark green fox-headed goddess holding a club and the blue wolf-headed wind goddess waving a flag are also included among the power goddesses. All other animal-headed goddesses cited above—the deer, snake, yak, dog and sea-monster goddesses—are *yoginī* power deities.

[34] A Tibetan artist-informant identified this animal as a crab-headed deity, though this animal is not mentioned in the text of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975).

in their hands. Thus the tiger-headed flesh-eating deity of the south direction holds to her mouth a rope-like object signifying intestines (plate 61); and a wolf-headed deity clutches a disproportionately small human corpse. Again, the animals as represented in the paintings do not correspond with their textual description in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 65), since no mention is made in the text of the tiger-headed Vyāghrīmukhā with "crossed arms" as holding entrails; it is only the black fox-headed deity, Śṛgālamukhā, who is described as carrying intestines. The wolf-headed Śvānamukhā, however, is indeed described in the text as carrying a corpse.

In addition to the animal-headed deities, there are also fierce female deities not depicted in animal form, the eight cemetery goddesses, or *gaurī*s.[35] They have ashen, brownish or deep blue-coloured skin, three eyes, and bright red hair; only their head goddess is white (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 64–65). Like the animal-headed deities, they grasp miniature human corpses or skeletal parts in their hands, and also hold tantric implements. The dark blue-coloured Śmaśānī coming from the northeast direction, holds a severed human head in one hand and its much smaller decapitated body in the other; the orange Pukkasī coming from the southeast grasps entrails and eats them; and the white Gaurī coming from the east holds a human corpse for a club and a blood-filled skull cup[36] (plate 57).

Regarding the composition of the wall of the wrathful deities as a whole, the entire scene takes place in a watery atmosphere. Not only is the background coloured blue-green, but in the center of section A of the wall, numerous fish and ducks are shown swimming amidst waves alongside a kind of oblong tank filled with seashells (colour plate 60). The sea-green colours, delicate contouring of both human and animal figures, immense variety and naturalistic rendering of animal types, as well as the exaggerated facial expressions (seen also in the tranquil deities on the opposite wall) are reminiscent of the style of the temple paintings dating from the end of the 17th century at the Klu khang temple in Lhasa.[37] The paintings at Maṇi Lha khang might date from either the late 17th century, or, perhaps more likely, from the 18th century,

[35] These goddesses are called the "Eight Htamenmas" by Gordon (1978: 101) and the "eight Kerimas" by Rhie and Thurman (1991: 198).

[36] Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: 64–65.

[37] See illustrations of the Klu khang paintings in Baker 2000. I am grateful to F. Tiso for discussions concerning stylistic comparisons with the Klu khang.

when texts of the peaceful and wrathful deities of the *bar do* became more widely disseminated due to the spread of xylography.[38] However, the temple itself may have been rebuilt, even several times, over a much older foundation dating from around a thousand years ago because of oral history telling of its great age, and because of its close proximity to the 11th-century Balam Shatsa temple built by Klu mes in the old region of Glag lags settled by ancient kings (called Lags pa) named after the region (Uebach 1988: 509).

5. WALL OF ATIŚA AND HIS DISCIPLES (PAINTINGS OF THE ENTRANCE WALL ON THE RIGHT OF THE DOORWAY):

The remaining wall of the temple, that is, the narrow wall on the right of the doorway, displays, on the lower part of the wall, a full figure of the White Acala, "The Immovable", with grounded knee. He wears a simple crown, rather than a skull diadem, and a tiger skirt to which no heads are attached. Presumably, here, as in his Japanese form, he is seen as the defender of the righteous, the combatant against evil and the protector of the dead.[39] Thus he is enveloped in flames to symbolize his destructive powers; in this example the flames are without an aureole. Additional symbols of his destructive capabilities include a noose, which he carries in his left hand; a sword, which he raises with his right hand; and a *vajra*, which he wears in his hair.[40]

It is fitting that Acala is represented here, since this deity, like Avalokiteśvara and Tārā (in her white and green forms), was considered by Atiśa and his successors to be the most helpful of all deities for their religious missions (Rhie and Thurman: 1991: 264). Thus directly above Acala is a painting of Atiśa with his two disciples (plate 63), Legs pa'i shes rab, the monk, and 'Brom ston, the ordained layman and founder of the Bka' gdams order. Atiśa, his head tilted uncharacteristically to his left (plate 64)[41] and his hands in *dharmacakra mudra*, is seen with his symbol, a small *stupa*, on his right, just above his monk's

[38] See Cuevas (2003: 18).

[39] See Getty (1988: 34 and 170) regarding Fudo (Acala) in Japan, where the god is the form Vairocana assumes to combat evil. He is also viewed as Vajrapāṇi because of his *vajra* symbol. In his four-headed tantric form in Tibet, he is known as Acalavajrapāṇi (Gordon 1978: 63).

[40] See illustrations in Chandra 1991: 263, pl. 684 and p. 78, pl. 13.

[41] Normally Atiśa is represented with his head tilted to his right. See, for example, an illustration in Chandra 1991: 694, pl. 2232 (29).

bowl. On his left is his monk's sack. He wears his peaked red pandit's hat, patchwork monk's robes and a brown undergarment.

Enveloped in voluminous red and yellow monk's robes, and leaning towards Atiśa is the balding figure of Legs pa'i shes rab (plate 65) seated on Atiśa's left. He holds what appears to be a three-dimensional *mandala*. His portrait, in three-quarter view, is quite individualistic, with a longish nose, full, slightly smiling lips, low forehead, and intense, intelligent eyes, his maturity indicated by lines in his cheeks. His aureole is cleverly constructed of cloth made from the same type as his monk's gown.

On Atiśa's right, clothed in red monk's garb edged in black, is the seated figure of 'Brom ston (plate 66), his portrait likewise shown in three-quarter view. Indicative of his layman's status is his long hair, though his monk's robe signifies that he has been ordained (Rhie and Thurman 1991: 264). Like that of Legs pa'i shes rab, 'Brom ston's portrait, with its asymmetrical face (his left eye is higher than his right one), somewhat bulbous nose, arched eyebrows and puckered, though smiling mouth, is quite particularized. In his right hand he holds a red lotus flower, but damage to his left hand does not permit a determination as to what it might have held, though it would be logical to assume that it might have held the famous offering lamp which 'Brom ston had kept burning from the time he had met Atiśa in 1042 until Atiśa's death in 1054.[42]

CONCLUSION

Over much of this group of three figures there is a grayish film due to damage; and some areas, such as the *mandala* held by 'Brom ston, appear to be redrawn by incising over the original painting. However, because of the deliberate iconographic program linking Acala with the three masters, and also because of the similar refined drawing and expressionistic style of the portraits and of the peaceful and wrathful deities on the side walls, it does not seem—in this author's opinion—that merely because of the small redrawn sections of the painting, the group portrait was necessarily a later addition representing a conver-

[42] This subject is shown in a *thang ka* painting illustrated by Rhie and Thurman 1991: 265.

sion of the temple from the Rnying ma order to the Dge lugs one.[43] The portrayal of Atiśa and his disciples is not inconsistent with themes concerning the *bar do*, since, even in the time of Atiśa, there had been early *siddha* traditions concerning the "intermediate state"[44] in India, in the works of Tilopa and Nāropa (who was Atiśa's teacher); and these traditions had been transmitted to Tibet through Mar pa, the student of both Nāropa and Atiśa in India (Cuevas 2003: 40–49). Also, later, in Tibet, the liturgy concerning the *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* was not particularly identified with any one monastic tradition (Cuevas 2003: 20). Thus, initially, the temple may possibly have been Bka' gdams pa; and subsequent paintings of the walls may simply have remained faithful to the originals. An investigation of texts which might determine whether the Maṇi Lha khang was included among the temples converted to the Dge lugs order during the time of the 5th Dalai Lama, as well as a comparative study of the tranquil and wrathful deities of the *bar do* as represented in various monasteries in Tibet and in other Tibetan Buddhist lands and communities, remains for future research.

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[43] It has been suggested by Uebach (personal communication, September 2003) that Maṇi Lha khang might have been one of the temples converted to the Dge lugs pa order under the Fifth Dalai Lama.

[44] *Bar* signifies "gap" or "in between" and *do* signifies a mark, in other words, a "landmark" between two states (Fremantle and Trungpa 1975: p. 1 and 10).

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

55. Maṇi Lha khang, accessed by a bridge, in its setting by a stream across from the village of Rigna.
56. Exterior view of Maṇi Lha khang, its walled courtyard enclosing the front of the temple, which gives access to the temple's two principal rooms.
57. Red-haired ashen and blue-coloured demonic deities (left and centre) and a fierce blue-winged Vajraheruka Buddha clasping his consort (right).
58. Heruka Kīla grasping his *kīla* (*phur ba*), in the centre of the wall depicting the wrathful deities.

*59. Two *dbang phyug ma* goddesses: the scorpion-headed *yoginī* of the south direction (right) and the goat-headed *vajra* gate guardian with noose enclosed within a circle (left).

*60. The raven-headed flesh-eating goddess (one of eight *piśācī*s) with a sword (right) and the wolfheaded (?) wind goddess with a flag (left).

61. Two flesh-eating *piśācī*s: the lion-headed goddess of the east direction holding a corpse (right) and the tiger-headed goddess of the south direction with entrails in her mouth (left).
62. The deer-headed power goddess of the west holding a vase and a scarf terminating in human body parts (right), and the snake-headed power goddess of the east holding a lotus flower (left).
63. Atiśa with his disciples 'Brom ston on his right and Legs pa'i shes rab on his left, upper part of the entrance wall on the right of the temple doorway.
64. Atiśa in monk garb with his symbol, a small stupa, on his right.
65. The aged Legs pa' i shes rab holding a mandala that appears to have been redrawn.
66. 'Brom ston, whose long hair indicates his layman status, holding a red lotus flower.

SHA BO TSHE RING, ZHANG DAQIAN AND SINO-TIBETAN CULTURAL EXCHANGE, 1941–1943: DEFINING RESEARCH METHODS FOR A MDO REGIONAL PAINTING WORKSHOPS IN THE MEDIEVAL AND MODERN PERIODS

Sarah E. Fraser

Painting in A mdo, ethnic Tibet's easternmost center located in the Yellow River Valley in Qinghai Province, is undergoing an important renaissance today. Since the early 1990s, funds from private individuals and the central government pour into the region to support temple restoration, largely to rebuild works, buildings and monuments that were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). During that decade, almost every religious object in eastern A mdo was targeted for destruction: murals, *thangka*s, portable paintings, sculptures, monastic structures, and sacred manuscripts; systematically material culture was violently torn apart and destroyed. The iconoclastic efforts to curb the power of Buddhist establishments in western China actually began in 1957–1958 in Kham (Sichuan and southern Qinghai Provinces) and A mdo (Qinghai Province) during the Anti-Rightist and Peaceful Liberation Campaigns; Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhist religious communities were especially vulnerable and targets of efforts to establish central Communist government control in the west.[1] Teams were sent to partially dismantle temple structures (to reduce their visual impact and corresponding clout); temple icons were confiscated, assembled in lists for removal by government officials. Lists of monks and nuns accompanied property surveys; monastic communities were partially disbanded. After a brief thaw in the early 1960s, teams arrived again in the mid-1960s and the destruction was more chaotic and widespread. By the 1980s art production had come to a screeching halt. As ironic as it may seem, infusions of government funds in the early 1990s have reinvigorated the patronage system and traditional networks appear to be functioning again. This is evident in numerous large-scale projects regularly underway at the two major Dge lugs monasteries, the Sku 'bum (Kumbum) and Bla brang (Labrang) Monasteries (fig. 10), at

[1] T. Shakya 1999: 136–62; M. Goldstein *et al*. 2004: 229–49.

scores of smaller village temples, and in the large number of orders placed by domestic and foreign individuals. Without question, this revival seems to be restoring art and cultural practices that predate the twentieth century. But what is that exactly? How can a regional art history of eastern Tibet/western China be written when so much of its evidence has been destroyed and no longer exists? This paper argues that artistic production lies as much in behavior, cognition, and process as it does in the completed object.

Most scholars acknowledge that the artistic traditions visible in Reb gong (the region of A mdo in eastern Qinghai province known for its artistic production) painting, sculpture, and appliqué predate eighteenth-century renovations at the Gro tshang Dgon pa (Qutansi temple) completed in Emperor Qianlong's reign (ca. 1782).[2] Among Tibetans and scholars internationally, Reb gong is widely acknowledged to preserve artistic techniques that all too often have been ripped from their roots in other parts of Tibet to the west (where artists fled and have not returned, while the majority of A mdo artists stayed put). Evidence of this is the revival of robust workshop production since the early 1990s; once workshops were permitted to reopen, artists began training with the essential tools and procedures of painting. In my tours of workshops over the last twelve years, I have seen assistants learning to make sketches, pounces, painting frames, executing and measuring icons according to grids, preparing and burnishing the painting ground, and completing fine-line overdrawing in gold—the activities of training typical of traditional workshops. The master-pupil relationship endures; students learn by tracing designs and applying color (plate 78). And the social fabric and religious network that gives painting meaning endures. Artists and their families are linked to local monasteries in a series of overlapping networks, both lay practitioners and monks train to be artists, and the temples preserve iconographic knowledge. Through painting, Reb gong is connected to a regional and greater Tibetan world. Its artists are in the enviable position of working in an artistic environment that has close links to its social matrix. Tibetan exiles have discovered that artistic process and craft production, which relies so much on place, site and process, does not transplant so easily to other contexts. As such, Reb gong art holds a special place among Tibetan artists for it embodies a precious artistic legacy.

[2] Xie Zuo, Qutan si, 3 cited in Linrothe 2001: 55. Linrothe also provides an important first attempt at the region's contemporary art history.

But what about the relationship of these post-eighteenth century, modern practices to the past? What kind of legacy can we trace from modern cultural activities in A mdo to the early period from 781 CE to the late ninth century where there was a pervasive Tibetan presence in northeastern Tibet (Qinghai and Gansu provinces)? There are plentiful examples of Tibetan compositional programs in the region: 1) Dunhuang silk banners, prints, documents, and cave-shrines (nos. 14, 156, 158, 159, 365, etc.) dating to 781–848; 2) caves 3 and 4 at Yulin created in the late eleventh century–mid-twelfth century; 3) cave 465 at Dunhuang built by Mongol patrons ca. 1225–1250; and 4) the spectacular Gro tshang Dgon pa (Qutansi) where work commenced in the late 14th century. But without plentiful examples of Tibetan painting from ca. 1400 to the late 17th–early 18th century remaining in the region, is it possible to propose a continuity of practice that links modern to medieval or even to talk of an A mdo art history that pre-dates the eighteenth century?[3] Does the systematic destruction in the latter half of the 20th century of nearly every painting housed in freestanding temples in A mdo mean that an art history of the region is impossible?[4] This paper argues that it is feasible to provide such an account by analyzing comparatively methods, tools, and processes of production in both medieval and modern periods. Taking advantage of the research methods used in ethnoarchaeological research to construct cultural traditions where similar gaps exist, such as in Turkey and Mexico, I suggest how we might begin constructing a regional history of A mdo art.[5] At the core of my premise is an analysis of technologies of art and a consideration of where those technologies are deployed geographically. Geographical and technological proximity allows this writer to create a linked art his-

[3] B. Horlemann's excellent paper in another associated 2003 PIATS conference volume, "Buddhist sites in eastern A mdo/Longyou" (Horlemann 2011), is the first systematic attempt to identify the existence and location of sixty temples in the region dating to the eighth to thirteenth centuries. Most, if not all, of the temples do not exist in their original state thus Horlemann turns to both Tibetan and Chinese written sources that provide locations. Logic would argue that wall paintings and thangkas would be produced along side the architectural compounds of these temples. Based on Horlemann's geographical diagram and analysis of medieval temples, my fall 2004 survey of A mdo and Kham temples indicates that painting and production must have existed in this continuum of the monastic built environment.

[4] I do not want to suggest that no research has been conducted on this region but that widespread destruction has removed the large body of evidence that would allow us to write a continuous history. Two volumes on the cultural monuments of A mdo and Kham have recently been published by A. Gruschke 2001; 2004.

[5] R. Gibbs 1991; C. Kramer 1979.

tory using elements of material culture of both periods. This essay expands upon earlier work I published regarding mural production with pounces (stencils) in the medieval and modern period focusing on the site of Dunhuang during the medieval period and in A mdo during the early 1990s; I will not review this research here.[6] Instead I focus primarily on *thangka*s and banner paintings on cloth. Given space limitations I offer a general overview and will omit other corresponding technologies including printing and design management.

The other purpose of this article is to provide a preliminary account of an exchange between artists in the 1940s that sheds light on how modern practices inform the study of the past. During the winter of 1941–1942 to the summer of 1943, well before the destruction of A mdo paintings and temples, a well-known Chinese artist, Zhang Daqian (1899–1983) sought the expertise of Reb gong artists to rediscover and reclaim the riches of medieval Buddhist art. When Zhang hired five Reb gong artists who were working at the Sku 'bum Monastery in the spring of 1941 to accompany him to Dunhuang, he tapped into a flourishing tradition and channeled an expertise that reached back to the medieval period. One of these artists, Sha bo Tshe ring (1922–2004), went on to become a nationally recognized "Master Painter of the Fine Line Painting Style" [*gongyi meishu huashi*] in 1988. He maintained an extensive workshop in Seng ge gshong ya mgo (Upper Village of Wutun, near Tongren) with his sons until his death in January 2004.[7] In

[6] Fraser 1996b.

[7] The certificate was awarded from the Beijing government in April 1988. Some clarification is needed regarding his name, sons, and followers. He is known as Sha bo Tshe ring the Elder. He had a student, known as Sha bo Tshe ring the Younger, who worked closely in his style (a slight difference in local pronunciation allows people to differentiate between them); this artist is now retired and lives in Xining. The spelling and pronunciation of Sha bo Tshe ring has several different variations. In the local Tu ethnic dialect used by residents in Seng ge gshong ya mgo Dgon pa (Wutun Upper Temple village) his name is pronounced Sha bo Tshe rang, replacing the 'i' of the last syllable with an 'a'. Differences in oral pronunciation from written Tibetan are common and often change dramatically from village to village. From the Chinese, his name is romanized Xiawu Cairang (夏吾才让); in materials associated with his activities in the 1940s, his Chinese name is given as Xiaowu Gelang (小乌格郎). Sha bo Tshe ring's two sons are Dge 'dun dar rgyas (Gengdeng Daji 更登大吉), his biological son and Suo Nan (索南), adopted. Both are artists. Dar rgyas maintains an workshop in his quarters at the temple often overseeing the day-to-day operations in his father's workshop. Suo Nan is associated with the Huangnan Art Center in town, Rong bo; when his adopted father was still alive, Suo Nan often went to his home and participated in workshop projects. I conducted interviews with Sha bo and Dge 'dun in June 1999, July 2002, and November 2003, see http://buddhist-art.arthistory.northwestern.edu/buddhistweb/ for video clips from the second interview.

a photograph taken of Sha bo Tshe ring at the end of his long, distinguished career, he stands in his courtyard atelier displaying a painting of Sakyamuni executed in the style typical of his workshop characterized by the overdrawing (plate 68). Copious amounts of fine-line gold detailing are applied to the surface adding highlights to other precise lines that define buildings surfaces, clothing, and landscape. In general, the final stage or layer of *thangka* painting distinguishes an average painting from a great one; overdrawing adds value to a *thangka* because, done well, it can represent almost half the work and time expended in the painting process. I had many occasions to view a representative range of techniques in the workshops of A mdo during ten research trips taken over twelve years from 1992–2004.[8] I will argue that the consistency in technological skill between medieval Dunhuang and the techniques that endure in A mdo coupled with the geographical proximity of both regions enables us to link past and present. But it is important to understand the historical context of both these areas to gain perspective on how we might creatively retool our understanding of the area. The interaction between Zhang Daqian and Sha bo Tshe ring in 1941–1943 sheds light on period of immense change in the A mdo region. Together these artists and another four painters from Reb gong copied hundreds of Dunhuang wall paintings dating from the fifth to thirteenth century. By 1949, the techniques they developed to trans-

[8] I conducted ten research trips from 1992 to 2004 to investigate Reb gong artistic practice: 1992 (Sku 'bum, Rong bo (Tongren), Seng ge gshong ya mgo and ma mgo, and Bla brang Monastery); 1993 Bla brang Monastery; 1997 Rong bo (Tongren), Seng ge gshong ya mgo and ma mgo, Gnyan thog, Gomar Mchod rten); 1999 (Sku 'bum, Rong bo; Seng ge gshong ya mgo; Gnyan thog and Bla brang Monastery); June and July 2002 (Sku 'bum, Rong bo, Seng ge gshong ya mgo, Gnyan thog, Gomar); 2003 (March and November, Rong bo, Seng ge gshong ya mgo and ma mgo, Gnyan thog, Tsongkha Taktser (Ping'an, birthplace of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama), Gro tshang Dgon pa, and Wendo Dgon pa (Wendusi and birthplace of the Tenth Panchen Lama); and 2004 (August), Rong bo and 15 area temples which texts indicate have connections to the 8th–13thcenturies. My primary objective was to visit painters, sculptors, printers, and embroiderers working in both residential workshops and in monasteries. While taking into account a range of enterprises over this twelve-year period, I concentrated on the workshops and projects of 1) Sha bo Tshe ring and his sons in Seng ge gshong village and temple (Ya mgo Dgon pa); 2) Gnyan thog's 'Jigs med nyi ma (Jiumei Nima; see plate 70), his son and nephew (Bkra shis) at Bla brang Monastery, Gnyan thog, and 'Jigs med nyi ma's artistic direction of the 500+ meter-long *thangka* project financed by Tsong zhe rab rgyal executed in Rong bo town from 1996–2000: 3) the Reb gong art museum; and 4) the restoration of the Reception Hall of Aja Rinpoche's compound at the Sku 'bum by a team of artisans. Initial research findings were published in Fraser 1996a: 280–97; fig. 162–89 and *idem* 1996b.

fer compositions from mural to cloth and paper became the basis on which Chinese scholars studied the Dunhuang site until 1980. Over a thirty-year period, with government support artists made thousands of copies of Dunhuang murals, turning the 1941–1943 experiment into a patriotic enterprise in which copying Buddhist art of the past was used to bolster nationalistic pride. 'Folk' and 'minority' designs have come to symbolize a modern proletariat agenda drawing on traditions perceived as primitive and therefore authentic. While Chinese artists, scholars and government officials were 'discovering' Buddhist culture in A mdo in the 1940s, traditions had actually never been lost or radically broken. Zhang's efforts, albeit in ways that he himself did not recognize, demonstrates that by the 1940s, while Han Chinese artists had 'forgotten' the Buddhist compositions and techniques of the medieval period, these critical cultural institutions, practices and techniques in fact had survived in regional workshops and were still in use by modern Tibetan painters in A mdo.

A photo taken in the spring of 1943 at Yulin Caves in Anxi, Gansu ca. 94 km east of Dunhuang and approximately 1000 km northwest of Xining, documents the interaction between the two artists (plate 67). Both artists (Zhang left, Sha bo, right highlighted by circles) stand with the other artists that also accompanied Sha bo from the Sku 'bum Monastery to the Gansu caves. Zhang's family and officials from the Northwest Investigative Team sent by the Republican government based in Chongqing stand alongside them. Zhang's agenda was distinct from any government survey group dispatched to study silk road art history and culture and establish the Dunhuang Art Institute. Zhang first set out from Chengdu in 1940 to investigate Dunhuang but turned back upon hearing the news of his brother's death. He turned back in Guangyuan, a town in north central Sichuan province where Zhang stopped to view some of the hundreds of cave shrines at the Thousand Buddha Cliff [Qianfo ai] and Huangzi Temple).[9] He left Sichuan for Dunhuang again in May 1941, and paid a visit to the Sku 'bum Dgon pa, the important Dge lugs monastery where the current Dalai Lama studied before moving to Lhasa to assume power; it is also the birthplace of Tsongkapa (1357–1419).[10] There Zhang met the Reb gong

[9] Li Yongqiao 1998, 1: 180–81.

[10] According to members of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's family who still live in his birthplace village Taktser, when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1876–1933) was travelling between the Bla brang and Sku 'bum Monasteries in the late 1920s–early 1930s, he

artists for the first time at work in the monastery. Zhang would return at the end of the year to learn techniques from these artists he observed during this first visit. Among the procedures he noted as being radically different from his own were stretching and preparing canvases, adding bright minerals colors, and applying gold detailing. Zhang was not the only one interested in A mdo at this time. Many explorers and government officials mounted expeditions to Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia and western Sichuan—all regions that are part of Eastern and Central Tibet (A mdo and Khams) from 1928 to 1948. Among them was the ‘archaeologist of art’ Wang Ziyun who lead the Northwest Art and Relics Research Team; Wang and his team also went to the Sku ’bum in late 1941 and again in late 1943 to visit these painters and study Tibetan art.[11]

After Zhang’s initial encounter with Sha bo and the other Reb gong artists at the Sku ’bum, he spent the summer and fall at Dunhuang, dispatching his son in October 1941 to return to the monastery to inquire about the possibility of the Reb gong painters coming west to the Dunhuang caves to help with the enormous copying project he envisioned. During this period, Zhang realized that if he were going to try and copy a sizeable number of wall paintings—eventually he identified over 300 of the 492 caves now known at the site—he would need extra hands to proceed with any efficiency. But his return to the Sku ’bum in late 1941 for a three-month stay in the Xining area demonstrated that Buddhist painting was entirely new to him and that he sought more than just technical expertise. Zhang realized the Reb gong artists’ vast knowledge of Buddhist art and iconography could illuminate and unlock the meaning of medieval paintings at Dunhuang.[12] According to Xie Zhiliu, a painter who worked with Zhang on the stylistic periodization of the grottoes, Zhang recognized that both the technical and iconographic elements of the Reb gong practice seemed similar to

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spent the night across a ravine from Taktser. He had a dream that the next Dalai Lama (his reincarnation) would be born here; the lion-shaped mountain face is a symbol of this incarnation.

[11] Wang 1995.

[12] Zhang’s intentions, though, were entirely self-serving. He was eventually asked to leave Dunhuang in May of 1943 because he treated the site like his own, peeling away layers of later reconstructions dating to the eleventh–thirteenth centuries to look for eighth-century murals. Later he went on to forge many Tang dynasty (618–907) paintings selling them for needed cash by drawing on his knowledge of Dunhuang figures.

Dunhuang—as if Reb gong art provided some kind of key to understanding what made Dunhuang painting work both in terms of style and meaning.[13] Zhang hired Shawo and his fellow painters as assistants and they left the Sku 'bum with Zhang for Dunhuang in March 1942. The photograph depicts them at the end of their fifteen-month-long stay in May or June of 1943 just before they returned to Xining (plate 67, left).[14]

Judging by the number of copies of Dunhuang murals that are now in three major collections, the team worked quickly and prolifically over a fifteen month period despite the extremely rough conditions. At least two hundred copies were made; they isolated distinct sections of the wall paintings making copies onto paper.[15] According to Sha bo, Zhang identified which sections he wished to transfer from the murals onto paper. On the instructions of Zhang, the team of Reb gong artists soaked paper in diesel fuel, which made the paper translucent and placed the treated paper over the wall to copy the specified designs. They then traced the outline of the figures with the paper over the figures in the wall painting. Off to the side, Zhang made sketches on smaller paper of key compositional features including color, period style, and notes of unusual details. Zhang then used these tracings to produce more polished copies, transferring or recopying them yet again onto silk. These final versions were executed in the studio that Zhang had established in the Upper Temple (Shangsi) at the base of the caves. According to the Director of the Sichuan Provincial Museum Wei Xuefeng, if Zhang felt he had all the artistic information he needed, the copies were completed and signed. Other compositions, especially the paintings dating to the earliest periods from the N. Liang to the N. Zhou (fourth to sixth centuries), were left unfinished omitting key features

[13] Xie Zhiliu in Chen 2001: 204.

[14] The artists are as follows (from right to left in plate 67): Sha bo Tshe ring (fourth figure from right) at age 21, Bsam grub (fifth from right), Dbang rgyal (sixth), and Rdo rje rin chen (held by Zhang Daqian). One artist, Rdo rje byams, who was also part of their team, does not appear in this photo but he is present in other pictures, Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, 2000a: 122–23. The Chinese names of the five artists: Xiawu Gelang, An Ji, San Zhi, Luozang Waci, and Dujie Linqie are listed in Li Yongqiao 1998, 1: 186.

[15] Zhang presented sixty-two of the Dunhuang copies to the Taiwan National Museum in 1967 (where his eventually built his residence and garden Moya jingshe). Another sixty Dunhuang copies are in the Sichuan Provincial Museum along with sketch notes (approximately forty) Zhang made on site. Also, he later produced scores of paintings in the style of his Dunhuang copies for various patrons. This latter type appears to comprise the majority of Zhang's Dunhuang paintings in the National History Museum, Taipei.

that should be added last, such as the pupils and other facial features. He left many of these unfinished works in Chengdu when he departed Hong Kong for India in 1949. Although he fully intended to return to China, in the end he never did for fear of persecution. Nonetheless, his family was persecuted in his absence. His first wife was pressured into donating Zhang's unfinished paintings to the Sichuan Provincial Museum collection.[16] At the Zhang Daqian museum in his hometown, Neijiang, Sichuan, not one of his paintings is on display for they own none; Zhang's art remaining in Sichuan was either destroyed or donated to provincial and national museums.

Zhang went to the South Asian subcontinent in the belief that the origins or roots of the early Dunhuang paintings were in Indian wall painting—there was little or no understanding of the relationship between objects across Asia in Tibet, India, China, Afghanistan, and Central Asia at this stage in Buddhist studies in China. Zhang spent approximately three months copying Buddhist wall paintings at Ajanta moving between his base in Darjeeling, to Delhi and Maharashtra State. Zhang also held an exhibition in New Delhi of some sixty Dunhuang copies he brought with him (exhibitions were how Zhang paid for his travels and those of his companions).[17] These were the only 'original' copies he had in his possession from the Dunhuang project. After he left India these Dunhuang copies were subsequently incorporated into series of shows mounted in his succession of adopted homes, including Argentina, Brazil, and California; later, when he retired to Taiwan, the Taiwan National Museum acquired the sixty Dunhuang copies that traveled the globe with Zhang. The copies and forgeries Zhang made and sold based on the Dunhuang paintings is the topic of another essay and much larger book project.

In this essay I focus on the artistic tradition that Zhang connected with when hiring Reb gong assistants. Few recognize the importance of the A mdo painting tradition and its medieval roots. These roots are different than the understanding of Buddhist painting origins Zhang sought in India. Here I argue not for the origins of A mdo art in Dunhuang, rather for a homology of practice that has strong regional ties. Based on draft materials extant from both medieval and modern cultures, I pursue a comparative analysis of material culture, technolo-

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[16] Examples of these unfinished paintings are the paintings reproduced in plates 1, 2, 15, 17, 22, and 48 in Chen 2001.

[17] Chen 2001, 190; Li Yongqiao 1998, 2: 329–30.

gy, artistic behavior, and the painter's spatial relationship to works of art under production.

When the five Reb gong artists parted with Zhang in June 1943, they each presented him with a painting of their own creation using Dunhuang elements; according to Sha bo Tshe ring they added dedications on the back of the painting as customary in the Tibetan tradition. One of these paintings survives; the image of Avalokitesvara is executed in the Dunhuang manner with strong contour lines and pale wash. It is not a direct copy of a medieval figure but a personal rendition in that style that introduces Reb gong elements to a medieval model.[18] The cartouche is in Chinese but the long inscription above, a *sūtra* excerpt, is in Tibetan. Combining these two linguistic systems in a Dunhuang-style painting demonstrates that the Buddhist traditions these Reb gong artists encountered in Dunhuang could be easily integrated into their own tradition and vice versa. In fact, the artist's facility in moving between past and present in his parting gift to Zhang was recognition that the medieval paintings he copied were not that distant from his own tradition in A mdo. These paintings by each of the artists make it clear that it was largely through Reb gong interpretations of the past that Buddhist painting of Dunhuang could be understood in mid-twentieth century China. That is, without Tibetan mediators the history of Buddhist art on the empire's borders, or where Sino-Tibetan traditions interweave, would be lost to Chinese scholars and artists.

The interaction between Zhang, Sha bo, and the other four Reb gong painters provides important artistic information about the region. It tells us that painting was active and flourishing in Reb gong during the 1940s and that artists deployed iconographic models, which linked back to a long history of practice and production. For Zhang it was a lens through which he was able to grasp and access Silk Road culture—a topic that became popular during the 1930s and 1940s. Zhang's interest in A mdo art and culture was part of a larger, systematic investigation by explorers and visitors with decidedly modern implications and his activities should be viewed in light of this larger picture (albeit only briefly here).

The northwest regions of China and eastern Tibet, Xinjiang, and Mongolia were the focus of heightened military, economic, and scientific investigations that linked to national security. In addition to dis-

[18] Chen 2001: 118, pl. 43.

patching art and archaeological research trips from 1940–1944 in which scholars identified and analyzed important artistic remains, the Nationalist government launched economic, geological, military, agricultural and natural resource experts to this region on a regular basis from 1932–1948. Largely the interest stemmed from a concern about the vulnerability of national borders in the northwest and the Russians who were beyond the porous boundaries, the potential threat from a population largely dominated by non-Han Chinese ('minorities') who shared an ethnic history with groups in western Russia, available natural resources that could be exploited in order to dominate the region economically, and the ways that transportation such a rail and road lines could be extended throughout the region including lines to Tibet in order to better control this vast region.[19] In some ways, the intellectual interest in Buddhism and links to China's past were secondary but a thorough knowledge of the cultures of this region through archaeological digs, geographical surveys, and preservation of artistic remains provided an historical framework and rationale for reconquering and exploiting the region for modern political purposes. Keen interest linked religious practice, geography, artistic ruins, and national security. Collectively, scholars and government officials set out to know everything about Qinghai, Gansu, Shaanxi, Ningxia and Sichuan, how Tibetan Buddhism and Islam were practiced, and the social customs of the Tibetans, Hui, Mongolians, and others living in the region.

Zhang's interest in A mdo painting must be seen against this backdrop. He recognized that in order to truly access the past he had to rely on modern artists in the region. Instinctively, if not for the right reasons, Zhang saw that the history of regional Buddhist art was embodied in the modern painting ateliers operating alongside the great regional monasteries.[20] This is evident in the technology that Reb gong artists used. Although there is no evidence to suggest that in his brief trips to Europe, Zhang Daqian would have the access or inclination to investigate the artist's preparatory drafts from Dunhuang, which entered European collections in 1907–1910 after the discovery of the Sūtra Cave in 1900, Zhang was an artist who could gauge artistic technology.

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[19] One such trip was conducted from June 7 to December 17, 1943. Guoshi guan, ed., 1987.

[20] In fact, it is said that the ancestors of the Tu ethnic group are the Tanguts or Xi Xia who were devout Buddhists and controlled Dunhuang from 1035 until the arrival of the Mongols in ca. 1225.

In my analysis of Dunhuang's technical regimes used to paint fixed murals and portable banners, it is clear that both modern A mdo and medieval Dunhuang artists employed many of the same tools, such as pounces, tracings, printing blocks for sūtras and *dhāraṇī*, and sketchbooks for iconographic notes and ritual practice. Painting formats are also consistent between periods. For our purposes here let us focus specifically on several examples that demonstrate the consistency of artistic technology from medieval Dunhuang and present-day A mdo. The first example comes from a painting session during 2002 in the courtyard workshop of Sha bo's son, Dge 'dun dar rgyas, who was the Assistant Manager of Administrative Affairs for the Seng ge shong ya mgo (Upper Temple, Wutun village).

Learning to execute underdrawing is a fundamental skill in a painting atelier. An artist-in-training is set up outside where copious light will shine through the painting surface illuminating the design on the reverse. A line drawing on paper is attached face down on the suspended canvas so the black lines are visible to the artist through the cloth canvas on the front. Direct tracing serves several functions in the workshop. It allows a new artist to rely directly on the drawing of his teacher and more accomplished artists. Chiefly, it provides a foundation for the artist's composition; with basic outlines established, layers of color can be applied. But in addition to being useful to the trainee, tracing is the easiest way to transfer a design and more established artists use it under specific conditions to expedite the painting process.

Two primary types of design transfer are used the painting workshop.[21] One is to make an exact copy, which almost by definition has to be done by tracing visible in its reproduction; the other involves placing the original alongside the fresh painting surface and capturing the composition's most salient features. Estimating size and shape, the artist consults the original and executes a freehand interpretation on the new painting surface. Examples of both types can be found in both modern and medieval painting in the region. A set of banners produced in the ninth century surely was executed using the tracing technique. Two banners of bodhisattvas are reproduced flanking the modern Reb gong painter; one holds a *cintāmaṇi*, the other a censer (plates 79 and 80). Their measurements, less than 2 centimeters difference in either width or length, indicate the closeness of the

[21] See Fraser 2004, chapters 3 and 4.

design and format.[22] Closer scrutiny of the compositions reveals that the position of the arms, twist of the torso and head, the direction of long, white sacred thread, and the cascading of the drapery are identical. These two paintings are mirror images of each other traced from the same design in a manner undoubtedly similar to the method used by the artist in the A mdo courtyard. In the Dunhuang banners tracing was used efficiently, allowing the painter to quickly establish a design to create a paired set. Among the extant Dunhuang paintings other themes appear to be created using the same sketch to effect the appearance of a related set of paintings, including the devārajas of the four directions.[23] The artist simply changes the color, details, and textile patterns to alter the appearance to suggest variation.

Executing new paintings and temples artists participate in the constant process of constructing and renovating the Buddhist temple. De 'dun dar rgyas oversaw the making of a building dedicated to Maitreya at the Seng ge gshong ya mgo; work began in 1999 and took almost three years (plates 73 and 74). The extensive timber pillars remain visible during the construction process. Once completed they were embellished with an elaborate façade and a massive stone plinth. The roofline reflects a hybrid architectural style typical of the A mdo region that combines eaves from the Chinese system with the massive, solid wall structure of the Tibetan architectural tradition. Inside, in addition to the colossal, golden image of Maitreya (plate 76), over forty-five paintings embellish the interior. These were donated by different families in the Seng ge gshong (Wutun) village who made them specifically for this hall according to the elaborate iconographic program. Since many of its inhabitants are artists by trade, the interior is in a sense a record of recent regional painting history and a survey of distinct local painting styles. Each *thangka* contains an inscription of the donor family's name. As a group, one also recognizes the areas of commonality which places them squarely in the Reb gong lineage including the telltale bright pastel palette, which even at its most saturated or wrathful effects a light, airy quality. There are no muddy colors, and

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[22] Since the triangular section at the top, which usually holds the loop from which to hang the banner, is missing, the measurements are of the main, rectangular portions of both banners only.

[23] Fraser 1996a and 2004.

each figure is executed with a crisp precision delineated in fine overdrawing and copious amounts of gold.[24]

The process of creating and remaking art and copying older works to incorporate them into new programs is another process intrinsic to both the modern Reb gong and medieval Dunhuang traditions. It is part of the millennium-old system used by Dunhuang artists who painted hundreds of cave shrines containing thousands of compositions regularly over a four-century period from the sixth to tenth centuries. In Reb gong particular circumstances in the last half-century substantially increased demand for works of art. As with other persecutions of Buddhism, the destruction effected during the Cultural Revolution was comprehensive in A mdo. But two decades after the majority of regional art was destroyed, new replacement sets of important works were ordered. The two largest monasteries in the region, the Sku 'bum and Bla brang Dgon pa, patronized large art construction projects in the early 1990s. During this period I encountered the rebuilding of a Reception hall for the quarters of Aja Rinpoche at the Sku 'bum. At the Bla brang Monastery another large project of 108 *thangka*s for a newly-built *mchod rten* ordered by Rinpoche Gyang tang sang was underway in 1992–1994. The primary painter for this latter project was 'Jigs med nyi ma of Gnyan thog, the village just across the river from Seng ge gshong where Sha bo Tshe ring's family lives. 'Jigs med nyi ma was assisted in the large, multiyear project by his son, Bkra shis, and nephew (plate 70). He sits confidently between two paintings representing the distinct stages of the painting process ranging from underdrawing (right, sketch of Rdo rje phag mo) to finished work (left, painting of Mkha' skyod ma). The deity tips a skull bowl of blood to her face; the typical placid, serene Reb gong sky of linear, white clouds and a gradient, blue frames the wrathful figure enveloped in fire. Jokmeng worked out of temporary painting quarters next to the *mchod rten* where the paintings, once finished, were rolled up and secured upon their dedication.

The artist was very well established at the time of this commission. He started painting when he was nine and, like Sha bo, was forced to leave the monastery during the Cultural Revolution, hang up his monastic robes, and lead the life of a layman. Both artists married and established extensive families. 'Jigs med nyi ma resides in an impressive residential compound in Gnyan thog newly fitted in 1999 with

[24] For a summary of the general features of the regional style see Linrothe 2001: 17–27.

scarce timber, carved and painted in a grand manner. As 'Jigs med nyi ma recounts, he was one of nearly a hundred students of the famous Gnyan thog painter Gegan Chos ldan (Chidan). In turn Chos ldan studied with another famous painter, Jiayang, of the same village. We would find a similar pattern of training if it were possible to compile a complete oral history of regional painting. The famous painters take on the best students who, by virtue of their high level training, become talented and in turn take on gifted students. Before the Cultural Revolution seriously disrupted this pattern of master-pupil training, hundreds if not thousands of young men in Reb gong became apprentices to the well-known painters, worked on the frequent commissions that would come to these masters, and eventually took on their own students. This type of tradition is not established precipitously and given the conservative nature of the training—tracing the hand of the master and imitating his style, working on commissions in a collaborative environment, and reproducing important iconographic programs that are central to area temples—it reflects a professional system long in place. As this training modality suggests, painting has been one of the most important livelihoods in Reb gong for at least three generations; and, based on the correspondences to older medieval art, one may extrapolate a continuum that reaches back to or is coherent with practices needed to produce the same kind of painting in the medieval period. Today these production practices are trying to reassert themselves once again as they are a key factor in the social and economic fabric of the region.

One of the important tasks of 'Jigs med nyi ma and his assistants at Bla brang in 1992–1993 was to copy older paintings and incorporate them into the larger sets of *thangka*s.[25] In their studio they propped up a painting of Mañjuśrī's paradise; judging from its condition it was made in the late 19th or early 20th century. Consulting the original, the nephew drew a sketch on a fresh, new canvas freehand. The older painting provided the model for a modern version. For other compositions in the *thangka* set of 108, 'Jigs med nyi ma worked with the patron to develop programs by consulting sūtras. This iconographic material was pulled together to form the basis of works that had been destroyed. His son holds the sketchbook in which they drafted these compositions (plate 69); two pages inside are reproduced in details (see figs 11 and 12). In the two maṇḍala diagrams, not all the details are executed,

[25] 'Jam dpal. See Fraser 1996a: fig. 185–87.

instead circles and representative details provide approximations. In upper left corner of the Kalachakra maṇḍala (fig. 11) organized around a wheel of eight spokes, descriptive notes indicate that number twelve is Vajravārahī.[26] The second maṇḍala (fig. 12, right side), contains a red marker referencing Vajravālī after the number two.[27] In the opposite corner after the number 42, the inscription indicates another deity (Rdo rje phreng ba). This manner of keeping notes for artistic production and ritual practice has roots in the medieval period (only two examples are explored below).

Two sketches from the tenth century found in Dunhuang's Sūtra Cave demonstrate a homologous system of iconographic notation. While the contents are not the same, the works represent a continuity of practice. In a sketch for the Diamond Maṇḍala, instead of using written instructions the medieval artist added color notations in yellow, blue, and brown for each of the five directions (fig. 13). The animals associated with each Buddha, the lion of Vairocana, the elephant of Akṣobhya, bottom, the horse of Ratnasambhava in the south (left), are noted in a cursory hand approximating shapes. The lines approximating shapes rather than squarely defining them indicate that it was probably not used for tracing but for reference much like the 'Jigs med nyi ma sketches were in 1992–1993. In the medieval example, the unusual addition of palette marks suggests that the drawing may have been used to make maṇḍalas in sand rather than on cloth.[28] Below is another ink monochrome diagram for reciting the Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī (fig. 14). Notations in Chinese are written next to two-dimensional depictions of basins and vases indicate the items to be placed inside the containers, such as water, incense, and lamp oil. The orientation of ritual space is further marked out noting the four cardinal directions, the location of ritual master's seat (bottom center), the stove or burner, and the Buddha's image. The sketches from both periods correspond in conceptual framework; correspondences are evident in terms of spatial orientation, materials used, and references to the technology (tools, formats, and materials) that will be used to execute the final product.

Sketches, despite that they often are not saved after the production process and are rarely deemed worthy of preservation in the Buddhist

[26] Rdo rje phag mo. Thanks to Jeff Watt, of the HAR, Rubin Foundation, for the transcriptions and deity references.

[27] Rnam snang 'jam rdor lha ma'i nang.

[28] Fraser 2004, chapter 3.

atelier, provide a great deal of information about process and the occupation of space experienced and projected by the painting practitioner.[29] In this context, a consistency in workshop production is evident and, by extension, we can imagine artists conducting their craft during the intervening centuries between the medieval and modern periods in much the same way. Extrapolating from this method of analysis, one could compare and contrast compositions of like themes from past and present including guardian figures, bodhisattvas, Śākyamuni and other Buddhas, paradises, and narratives. Identifying like examples would be the next logical step in an A mdo art historical analysis based on an ethnoarchaeological framework. While Zhang Daqian's copying enterprise was outside the monastic production system and a Tibetan patronage structure, he seems to have intuitively tapped into an authentic, ongoing tradition of Buddhist painting technical expertise that existed in the region for over a millennium. In consulting and collaborating with Sha bo and other Reb gong painters, he unwittingly worked to reincorporate this painting tradition into the mainstream. These Tibetan painters functioned as interpreters of a painting practice that Zhang and others who eventually set up the government-supported Dunhuang Art Institute (now the Research Academy), no longer had access to. That is, while Buddhist painting had been widespread through the late tenth-early eleventh throughout East Asia, by the thirteenth century the technical expertise required to execute complex paintings with the necessary finesse was primarily in the hands of painters of the Tibetan-Mongolian lineage of Buddhist art. Zhang emerged from a radically different painting background based on the literati ideal of the expressive artist. His was predicated on the genius model where the cult of personality and the author's identity was considered the defining factor in a painting. In Reb gong, master painters are celebrated but they rely on an extensive collaborative workshop system requiring the hands of many assistants and consulting with monks on elaborate iconography. The Reb gong tradition is central to understanding workshop painting throughout cultural Tibet in the past and present. Birthplace to both the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the recent reigning Tenth Panchen Lama, Reb gong is a cornerstone in regional Tibetan Buddhist history; its artistic practices endure with international implications despite recent efforts to erase them from the historical record.

[29] See de Certeau 1984 for a discussion of sketches and production; for an analysis of spatial occupation of production and residential environments see Gibbs 1991.

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Figure 10: Map of A mdo noting the location of Seng ge gshong, the village of Sha bo Tshe ring, its proximity to the Sku 'bum and Bla brang Monasteries; and the birthplaces of the 14^{th} Dalai Lama and the 10^{th} Panchen Lama

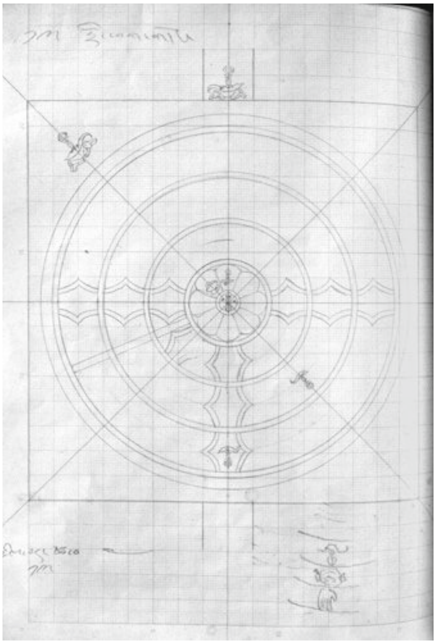


Figure 11: Detail of maṇḍala (no. 12) from sketchbook for Vajravārāhī (Ṙdo rje phag gdong)

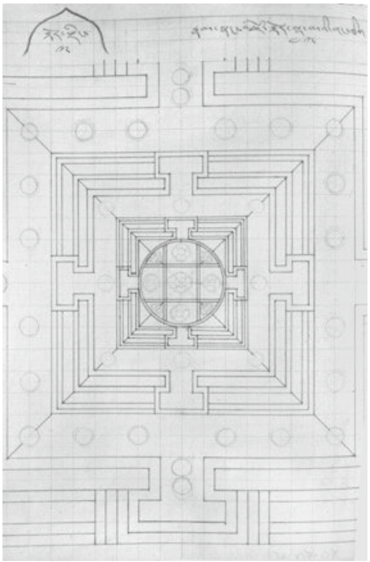


Figure 12: Detail of maṇḍala (No. 42) from sketchbook with reference to Vairocana Ṁañjuvajra (Rnam snang 'jam rdor).

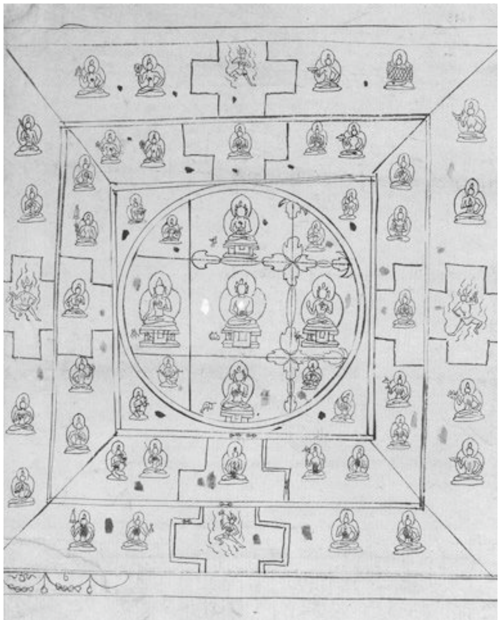


Figure 13: Drawing of maṇḍala. Dunhuang, ca. 10th century, ink with light colours on paper, 43.6 x 30.5 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France (P4518, 33). (Copyright: Bibliothèque nationale de France).

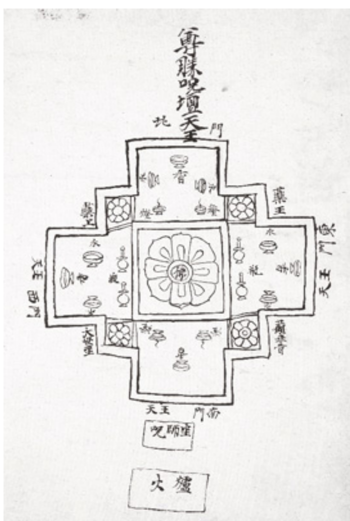


Figure 14: Drawing for the Uṣṇīṣavijayā *dhāraṇī*, altar diagram. Dunhuang, 10th century, black ink on paper, 44.0 cm x 30.5 cm. The British Museum (Stein painting 174). (Copyright: The British Museum).

CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

67. Sha bo Tshe ring as a young man (right) with Zhang Daqian (left) and other members of the team assembled to copy medieval wall paintings in 1941–43. The group stands in front of the Yulin caves, located to the east of Mogao Caves, Dunhuang.
68. Sha bo Tshe ring holding a work being painted in his workshop, June 1999.
69. 'Jigs med nyi ma's sketchbook used in the *mchod rten* project, Bla brang monastery, November 1992. (Photo S. Fraser)
70 'Jigs med nyi ma with finished and unfinished paintings made for the *mchod rten* project, Bla brang monastery, November 1992. (Photo S. Fraser)
71. Nāḍī Ḍākinī commissioned for the *mchod rten* project (finished painting in plate 70), Bla brang monastery, November 1992. (Photo S. Fraser)
72. Vajravārāhī commissioned for the *mchod rten* project (unfinished painting in plate 70), Bla brang monastery, November 1992. (Photo S. Fraser)
73. Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, Maitreya Hall under construction, June 1999.
74. Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, Maitreya Hall completed, June 2002.
75. Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, interior view (lower left of ground floor) of Maitreya Hall with wall painting in Reb gong style, June 2002.
*76. Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, interior view of Maitreya Hall with statue of Maitreya, June 2002.
*77. Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, interior view of Maitreya Hall (lower right of ground floor) with wall paintings in Reb gong style, June 2002.
78. Learning to trace a drawing on canvas, Seng ge gshong, June 2002.
79. *Bodhisattva* with *cintāmaṇi*, painted as mirror-image of opposite figure. Dunhuang, late 9th century, ink and colours on silk, 71.0 x 17.5 cm. London, the British Museum (Stein painting 136). (Copyright: The British Museum)
80. *Bodhisattva* with censer, painted as mirror-image of opposite figure. Dunhuang, late 9th century, ink and colours on silk, 68.2 x 19 cm. London, the British Museum (Stein painting 125). (Copyright: The British Museum)

‘MINOR’ ARTS, ICONOGRAPHY, TECHNIQUES, MATERIALS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS

A SURVEY REPORT ON A CARVED STONE TIBETAN "GO" BOARD. NEWLY FOUND EVIDENCE OF THE TIBETAN CULTURE OF "GO"

DRALHA DAWA SANGPO
(TRANSLATED BY KARLING PUCHUNG TSERING)

One day in the summer of 1999, the earth-hare year of the seventeenth sixty-year cycle according to the Tibetan calendar, I went to the home of Hor khang Byams pa bstan dar, a friend of mine. He told me about a strange stone carving recently found by some villagers near the ruins of Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace, where Srong btsan sgam po was born (colour plate 81). He said that he was going there together with Bsod nams don grub, an expert from the Museum of the Tibet Autonomous Region, to see and examine what the strange stone actually was. He encouraged me to go there with him and shortly we departed to see the ruins of Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace. It is located on the mountain slope to the west of Rgya ma township in Mal gro Gung dkar county, about seventy kilometers to the east of Lhasa. When we arrived there, we saw the ruins of the palace where Dharma king Srong btsan sgam po was born in the fire-ox year 617 to his father Gnam ri srong btsan and his mother Tshe spong bza' 'bri ma thod dkar. Seeing only some ruins at the foundation and the rest of the building destroyed almost to the ground, we both had countless feelings that could not be expressed by words.

When we interviewed Bkra shis, a villager who lived near the ruins of the palace, he said that several years ago, when rebuilding his house from the ruins of his old house's foundation, while digging earth and stones, he found this stone with strange drawings about two meters underneath the earth. He showed us the stone, which was placed on the northwest corner outside his house. Together with this, a clay bellows tube was also found. Because little attention was paid to what it was, children played with it as a toy and so it broke. When we examined the stone, we found that it is a not very well shaped rectangle of about 18 cm thick, 117 cm long, and 55 cm wide. The right and left sides of the stone are adorned with various unusual drawings, Tibetan symbols,

looking like right and left swastikas. In the middle of the stone there is a chessboard measuring 44 by 44 cm with a carved chart of 17 spaces by 17. On two of its corners, there are two indentations with a diameter of about 11 cm and a depth of 5 cm, which were supposed to be the places where the playing stones would be kept. We recommended to the villagers, including Bkra shis, that the stone should not be left carelessly outside the house, for it is a traditional Tibetan board for playing "go" and belongs to the precious cultural heritage of our country. Then all the people there together moved the stone to a corner inside Bkra shis's house.

Subsequently, Hor khang Byams pa bstan dar thought, "Now there are some ruins left from the palace's heritage. If the villagers continuously use the remaining stones from there, the heritage will soon be uprooted completely." He frequently asked me for some suggestions and also anxiously appealed to the leaders of the Autonomous Region's Party Committee, the local leaders at township level, and staff of other relevant institutions that would visit and survey the site and take measures to protect this heritage. Through his effort the carved "go" stone could be moved into the courtyard of the Museum of Tibet.

However, before finding its place in the courtyard, the stone was left in a corner of a small house inside the main gate of the Museum of Tibet with little attention. This is just like the Tibetan saying, "Although one has a jewel, he doesn't know that it is precious". After Byams pa bstan dar and I found out that the stone was left there carelessly, we looked for the leaders of the Museum of Tibet and frequently urged them to carry out research on the stone and take good care of it. The leaders of the Museum of Tibet promised to take good care of the stone and offered a white scarf to Hor khang Byams pa bstan dar and a certificate of merit, saying "This certificate is especially for Mr Hor khang Byams pa bstan dar. In order to protect the culture of our nationality urgently, he has offered the Museum of Tibet the precious stone board for playing Tibetan "go", which was found near the ruins of the Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace, where King Srong btsan sgam po was born." The leader of the Museum also offered a prize of 500 RMB to the Rgya ma municipality and to the villager, Bkra shis (300 RMB to the municipality and 200 to Bkra shis). We earnestly requested the Museum of Tibet to carry out research on the stone and clearly determine its value in regards to our cultural heritage. However, no research results have yet been seen. Therefore, I am attempting to carry

out a survey on my own here as best I can. This is just like the Tibetan saying, "When there is no cock, the donkey will signal the daybreak".

It is difficult to explain when the game "go" started in Tibet, but one may say that it existed about one thousand years ago. *The Old Chinese History of the Tang Dynasty*, which was first composed in 941, the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Gaozu, and finished in 945, the second year of the reign of Emperor Chudi of the later Jin Dynasty, when explaining about the political history of Great Tibet, states that dice and "go" were played in Tibet for entertainment. The stone board for playing "go" found near the ruins of the Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace further supports this statement, which had remained as a folk saying for a long time. From an early time, a folk saying in Bzhad mthong smon county in Shigatse prefecture, where a "king of go" supposedly existed in history, regarded "go" as an inauspicious tool to examine the omens of death and as a tool used by the black Bon followers to perform the rites of the Bon religion. Another folk saying related to Mount Bon ri in Kong po says, "In former times, when a Buddhist monk arrived at the holy mountain site, the native Bon followers became angry and encouraged him to compete with them in an intellectual debate. But because they didn't understand each other, they decided to compete in "go" and the followers of Bon won the game." These folk sayings clearly suggest that "go" is a game related to the Bon culture and that its history precedes the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet. Some people think that the Tibetan "go" tradition was originally introduced from China, India, or Mongolia.

Even though it is difficult to find written evidence regarding the term "go" prior to King Srong btsan sgam po, when *sgrung* (stories) and *lde'u* (stone divination and counting boards) and Bon were part of the government's administration, Nam mkha'i Nor bu (1996) shows that "go" belongs to the type of games called *rde'u 'phrul* or *lde'u 'phrul*. According to Nor bu, the *rde'u 'phrul* was the divination system having the most ancient essence amongst many other kinds of divination existing formerly: in the history of *rde'u 'phrul*, the latter is said to have belonged to the category of *rno mthong* divination which in ancient times the miracle worker Phywa legs rgyal asked the teacher Smra ba'i seng ge (Vādisiṃha, the "Lion of Speech", namely Gshen rab mi bo, in a Bon context) for. In a commentary on *rno mthong* it is also said that one should predict good or bad through studying the relationship between a human's own elements and natural elements. According to

Nor bu, this is a unique thought of the genuine Bon tradition during ancient times, from which we also learn that the tradition of *rno mthong* divination is characterized by features belonging to the ancient religion. Nor bu adds that, in later times, some Bon followers regarded Ārya Mañjuśrī Vādisiṃha as a deity of wisdom in their religious practice and viewed him as a figure different from Gshen rab mi bo che, although the Vādisiṃha who showed the *rno mthong* tradition of Bon religion to the miracle worker Phywa legs rgyal was actually Gshen rab mi bo che.

According to Nor bu (1996), the special drawing of *rno mthong* was formerly called *rde'u 'phrul*, referring to a miraculous divination showing hidden meanings and predicting the future. Later it came to be known as *rde'u drug* ("six pebbles"), a divination system based on the examination of good or bad omens by using six stones, although it was normally performed by using forty-two pebbles made of either rocks or glass: when performing a divination, the number of pebbles does not have to be six. Nor bu further explains how, when a divination was performed, the pebbles were arranged on a board with nine spaces and adds that, since the term *rde'u 'phrul* was difficult to pronounce and most people did now know its exact meaning, it slowly changed into *rde'u drug*.

Although, as I mentioned above, it is difficult to know whether there is a direct connection between "go" and stone divination there is a folk saying about "go" in Thongmon (Mthong smon) county, where a "King of Go" was said to have existed. It customarily regards "go" as a tool for performing the rites of "black" Bon in examining death. The old monks at Chari monastery, in Lang county of Lhokha prefecture, who have profound knowledge of Bon, say that there used to be a "go" board with a chart that was nine spaces wide and nine spaces long, and that they knew how to play it when they were young.

The later kind of "go" board, 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long, was probably introduced on the model of the former *rde'u* divination board. The kind of "go" board with a chart of 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long was also very popular during the time of King Gnam ri srong btsan, Srong btsan sgam po's father. One of Gnam ri srong btsan's ministers was Khyung po Spung sad zu tse, who beheaded the king of Tsang and offered all the 20,000 families of Tsang as subjects of the *spu rgyal*. Khyung po Spung sad zu tse was regarded as a talented player of "go". According to the ancient documents from Dunhuang, regarding the intelligence of Spung sad zu tse, by listening to the three kinds of

accounting and four kinds of law, he could identify them. Furthermore, whenever he played "go", he would always win against his opponent.[1] This further clearly proves that "go" was played during that time. Considering the fact that people like Khyung po Spung sad zu tse, who were talented at military affairs, liked to play "go" and were good at it, it may be suggested that "go" was not only a kind of entertainment, but may have also been regarded as a kind of skill related to military science.

Studying Tibetan "go" is not a simple task. If we carried out genuine research in the field of Tibetan "go", which was popular in areas inhabited by Tibetans including Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan, as well as Nepal, Bhutan and northern India, it might reveal some unknown aspects of Tibetan history, also proving that Tibetans have been a clever people since ancient times.

Although there are some people among us who do like to gamble by playing "go", there are hardly any who have carried out investigations or published research papers on "go", except for a few academic papers written by Chinese and foreign colleagues. Some Tibetan "go" research topics have been enumerated by the American scholar Peter Shotwell (1994). Here, I will introduce some of important points from that article.

1. The first research article on Tibetan "go" was written by Cheng Xiaoliu, a "go" player "of the ninth rank" and presently the editor of the *Chinese Go Magazine*. His point of view is that "go" was introduced into Tibet by Chinese people during the seventh century.

2. An opposite view to Cheng Xiaoliu's is held by the Japanese scholar Hejimu, and by the American scholars Paren (1994) and Shotwell (1994), who published research papers respectively in journals devoted to Japanese and American "go" studies.

3. Yan Zhangzhung, the editor of *Bod ljongs rtsom rig* (*Tibetan Literature*), wrote an article entitled "Dkar nag gi 'jig rten" ("The World of White and Black") and published it in *Gangs ljongs rig gnas* (*Tibetan Culture*). His article proves directly and indirectly not only that "go" was popular both in Tibet and China from ancient times, but also that the history of Tibetan "go" was longer than that of the Chinese.

[1] *Spung zad zu (tse) mdzangs kyang kyi tshad ni/ rtsis gra gsum/ zhal lce gra bzhi yang rna bas nyan zhing gchod/ myig mangs gra chig kyang zla la rtse na rgyal/*

The above articles mainly rely on Chinese and Tibetan historical documents, folk oral tradition, or customs of playing "go", and analyse the game rationally, but are not based on any archeological evidence, such as the the carved stone "go" board found underneath the ruins of Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace, where Srong btsan sgam po was born, suggesting that the kind of "go" board 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long existed prior to that king. We might learn more about this by carrying out a detailed investigation in relation to the history of Byams pa mi 'gyur gling.

Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace was the political centre during the reign of Gnam ri srong btsan and the early part of Srong btsan sgam po's life. Any objects or relics found in the ruins of that palace have great archaeological value. Therefore the carved "go" board unearthed there in 1999 is very precious evidence of Tibet's history during the early Tibetan kings.

Mr Hor khang Byams pa bstan dar asked his uncle, Nga phod Ngag dbang 'jigs med about the carved stone "go" board and received the following answer:

> I am glad to know that you went to Rgya ma in 1999 and that at that time you found a stone carved "go" board which is 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long in the ruins of Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace in Gnas nang. It is good that you subsequently reported about it to the higher-level authorities and I think that it is important that Tibet Museum is taking care of it and carrying out research work on it. You have made a great contribution towards the cultural heritage of Tibet instead of ignoring the relics. It is appropriate that you ask me about the way of playing and the history of the "go" board which is 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long. I also found a similar thing in the past and I will tell you about it now. When I was 27, I was appointed salary officer in Mdo smad for four years under the authority of Dza sag Bla ma Thub bstan mchog ldan and Zur khang Dbang chen tshe brtan, who were the governors of Mdo smad. The nomads outside of Derge and nomads of Ri bo che Chos gling monastery were located respectively to the east and west. They disputed the grassland's ownership and that finally led to fighting and killing. In accordance with the order of these two governors of Mdo smad, I went to the place where the dispute happened in order to settle the case. When I got there, I found that the dispute was very serious. A renowned and respected Buddhist monk, who was there as a conciliator, told me that there was a big boulder at the border between the nomads outside of Derge and Ri bo che Chos gling monastery. In former times, when the king Ge sar of Gling and his consort 'Brug mo were taking a walk there, they played "go" on a board that had been specially carved on that boul-

> der. It was said to be a border mark between the two nomad groups. In agreement with this folk saying, I took the representatives of the two sides, investigated the site and found a "go" board that was 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long clearly carved on huge square-shaped boulder. It clearly proved that the "go" board 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long was popular in Tibet since ancient times. I also played the "go" game since I was 16 and had some experiences playing "go" with friends among the nobility, Muslim merchants who were regarded to be very good at playing the "go" game around the Bar skor market in Lhasa, and some Chinese. We always played at that time the kind of "go" having a board 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long. The current "go" that is 19 spaces wide and 19 spaces long was introduced after the 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet. Before that time, I had never seen or heard about this kind of "go" board with 19 spaces. Please keep this in your mind and it will be much appreciated, and please tell me if there is anything that I can do for you in the future.

I will here discuss some other relevant documents whose contents are related to that of the letter above.

1. In his *The World of White and Black*, Yan Zhangzhung explains part of a Bon story relating that, in a time prior to the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet, a man was killed by a rival. When the former's son grew up, he wanted to take revenge upon the latter, but before acting he first examined whether it was the proper time to take revenge by playing "go". He won, so he took revenge and defeated his enemy.

2. Paren (1994) states that, "After the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the struggle for political power between De srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho and Lha bzang Khan became intense. The two sides' military powers were well-matched. Both sides knew that it would be nothing other than great losses on each side if they would fight and only rely on force. So they agreed to use peaceful means to determine the winner by playing "go". They played three times and Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho finally lost. Then it happened that Lha bzang Khan killed Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in 1705. Later on, Tibetans viewed "go" as inauspicious and refrained from playing it. Thus the custom of playing "go" declined. Paren (1994) also refers to a competition on a "go" board that was 17 spaces wide and 17 long between the prince of Sikkim and professional game players from Japan on the 2nd of April in 1959. At the same time he clearly shows the strategy and rules of the game.

3. Cheng Xiaoliu, the editor of the *Chinese Go Magazine* mentioned earlier on, also said that basically there have been not any developments in the Tibetan "go" game in the past century. Most of the former "go"

boards found in Tibet were only the 17 spaces wide and 17 long ones, and were carved on rocks by early Tibetans. Even nowadays, that kind of "go" board may be seen in the vast Tibetan inhabited regions in Sichuan and Qinghai provinces. There are also some local folk sayings relating to "go" in these regions. His article further shows that local nomads view that "go" had was played by King Ge sar about one thousand years ago.

From the above articles we feel convinced that there had been a tradition of playing "go" from the ancient times in Tibet, and it is a historical fact that later on it was introduced into and became popular in some border countries, including Sikkim.

In the same way, if we examine the term *mig mangs* (which we translate as "go game"), we may suggest that it was used at least about one thousand four hundred years ago. In later developments of history, because the sound of this word had been changed, the spelling also changed. We know that it appeared as *myig mangs* in early Dunhuang documents, but later changed to *mig mangs* or *mig mang*. The names *myig mangs* or *mig mangs* were given according to the playing board. *Mig* refers to the chart on the board, while *mangs* refers to the fact that the more charts there are on the board the more stones are required. So the name is thought to have been more in conformity with the way the board and stones were used. But some people argue that the term should be *mig dmag*, which refers to using the sense of eyes in playing the game, without considering the actual spelling, *mig mangs.* I think that is a mistake.

In addition, the Tibetan "go" game has developed the special use of some terms. The four corners of the "go" board are called the four *rtse* ("tips"). Before the actual "go" game is started, six stones from each player are placed alternately around the borderlines of the board's four sides. These are called *spo* ("markers").[2] The area in the middle of the "go" board is called gung ("centre"). To play the stones by putting them on the different spaces of the "go" board is called *ju.*[3] Although some of these terms may cause difficulties of understanding because of their archaic meaning or because of different dialects, they are unquestionably Tibetan.

Through some discussions with Thub bstan rgyal mtshan, from Dom

[2] *Spo* refers to the marker pieces and literally means "to move".
[3] With reference to playing.

po, it is clear to me that Tibet has some unique customs for playing "go" compared to other countries. First the white and black stones for playing it would each occupy two corners of the board, while the six bigger stones called *spo* would be put around the third inner line of the board's chart. Then *ju* was played in turns. If the two players were not the same in terms of cleverness, then the weak one would ask for a reduction of the stones by various figures such as *brgya chag* (reduction of a hundred stones). If they were well-matched, then one had to determine who should play first. The way that was decided was by throwing two white and black stones on the board or on the carpet underneath it. The person whose stone was upside down would play first. The player who was going to play first had to get at least half of the stones. The reason was that the "go" board, being 17 spaces wide and 17 spaces long, had 289 spaces in total. It required 289 stones, one for each of the 289 spaces. Each player in theory would have 144.5 stones. But it is impossible to have half a stone on either side. Therefore, the side with 145 stones, in fact, would get half the stones of the other side.

Then one would begin playing *ju*. As a characteristic of playing *ju*, the two groups formed by six stones at each tip of the "go" board are called *rtse la nya mo drug chags* ("six fish at the tip"). At the edge, there are two groups formed by eight stones which are called *mda' la shwa ba brgyad chags* ("the eight deer in the lower valley"). At any place on the "go" board, when two stones are next to each other on the same line, there is a saying that "at the two stones next to each other, dwells the strength of an elephant". Generally, *ju* is categorized as *rtse ju* (playing at the tip) or *ltag ju* (playing at the base), *spyi ju* (playing back and forth) or *dkyil ju* (playing at the centre), *am ju* (playing at the ears or the corners) and *og ju* (playing at the chin or centre line). Those who are skilled at playing *ju* are called *rgyang ju* and those who are bad at it are called *bong ju*. Stones which are placed on the sidelines while considering how to move are called *bsam rdo* ("thinking stones"). For more detailed information regarding the terms of the "go" board, it is important to understand them by actually playing the game.

There are some distinct features in the tradition of determining the winner. For instance, if one stone is defeated by the stones of the other side, it is called taking out the *a ya'o* ("small dog"). In this case, since one cannot get revenge, he or she has to go to other places to play the "go" game. While playing the "go" game, if a person is likely to lose

the game, he or she would say, "the 'go' game is an evil game, therefore, I should stop it here". At the same time, he would trick his opponent into going to another place in order to avoid the danger of losing the game. If there were no other places where they could play the "go" game, they would stop it by saying both sides are equally clever. If a player lost his own two corners and the one stone in the middle, belonging to both sides, he or she would be regarded as having lost 25 stones in total. That is called *rtse bcad gung bcad* ("losing both the corners and the centre"). It is said that in some parts of Tibet there was the custom that players spoke or sang special songs to mock each other while playing "go". Regarding the content of these songs, people are said to have called the stones by various animal and bird names as a metaphor for preying on each other. They would tease each other by using the boasting language attributed to predators. Although these songs did not have any impact on the actual game, they directly prove that "go" is a game with unique characteristics in Tibet, just like the dice game.

As the saying goes, "it doesn't matter if you say a hundred words, the popped barley will still only result in *rtsam pa*". To sum up, the "go" game has long been popular among Tibetans. Its knowledge did not appear suddenly, but developed gradually through calculation and reasoning. As the original foundation of the Tibetan civilization stemmed from the indigenous pre-Buddhist culture, if one looks at its long history and various folk sayings, there is no doubt that "go" also developed from the Bon culture. Another folk saying goes, "The stones of the 'go' board are very tricky and women are even trickier than the 'go' board", meaning that the "go" game is regarded to be something which is very difficult to understand. Carrying out thorough research on the "go" game, will be of great benefit in order to perfect and develop Tibetan studies as a whole.

In order to make a small contribution towards such research, I wrote this article on the stone-carved "go" board found among the ruins of Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace, where Srong btsan sgam po was born. Although the Party and the government provide various policies and principles towards the protection of the minorities' cultural heritage, it is difficult to implement these policies thoroughly in the local society because of internal and external causes. Various problems continuously occur, such as stealing, smuggling and destroying our cultural heritage. The purpose of this article is also to encourage the administrative staff at various levels to protect and take care even of a tiny piece of cul-

tural heritage, even of a single room's ruins, in order to avoid getting our heritage lost or scattered, not to be unworthy of the Party and government's expectations, not to lose the valuable cultural heritage left by our ancestors, to earn our salary, and to take responsibility for our properties.

In this article I have explained the research value of the stone-carved "go" board in regard to Tibetan cultural history. If it proves a little useful, even in the measure of a mustard seed's amount, in order to restore the Tibetan culture that has declined, as well as to develop and innovate the culture that has not declined, I shall be glad, for this small effort will have achieved an important result.

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*81. Stone board for playing "go", unearthed among the ruins of Byams pa mi 'gyur gling palace, Srong btsan sgam po's birthplace. (Photo: Dawa Sangpo).

A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DECORATIVE DESIGN ON TIBETAN *RLUNG RTA* (PRAYER FLAGS)

TENPA RABTEN
(TRANSLATED BY PUCHUNG TSERING)

Abstract: This article examines the origin, context, characteristics, and development of the decorative design on Tibetan *rlung rta* or prayer flags. It determines that the decorations and pictures on the Tibetan prayer flags originated with the Bon religion and that the designs that represent Buddhist themes were added later in the course of history.

Key words: Designs on *rlung rta*, the five elements, the eight auspicious symbols, and the seven auspicious royal symbols.

Tibet is surrounded by many white, snow-capped mountains that look like white crystal stupas, and is covered everywhere with lakes and ponds looking like mirrors of turquoise and vessels of emerald. It has boundless expanses of grassland on which the multicoloured flowers bloom, and dense forests and various other trees cover the southeastern part of it.

It is clearly proved by historical documents and by ancient cultural relics that the Tibetan people is one of the important minorities in China that has a very long history, has the most elaborate culture, and a people who places greatest importance on the arts. According to written document that have been found so far, Tibet has a history of over three thousand eight hundred years. According to the *Zhang bod gna' rabs kyi lo rgyus nor bu'i me long*, over 3,845 years ago, Gshen rab mi bo che was born in 'Ol mo lung ring, in Zhang zhung, and he preached the doctrine of Bon. Ever since that time, the religion of g.yung drung Bon has been established in Tibet. In addition, as a result of their examinations of the ancient ruins, clay pots with drawings, stones and nephrite items that have been found in many parts of Tibet, especially near Kha rub village near Chab mdo, the esteemed archeologists of our nation have concluded that Tibetan people have a history of over four or five thousand years dating back to the New Stone Age. There is not

very much difference between the historical records and the results of scientific research regarding Tibet's history, showing that artistic culture was introduced to Tibet and developed there four thousand years ago. Besides that, in the countless volumes on culture, arts, history and Buddhism written by our ancestors there are valuable references for researchers carrying out studies on Tibetan culture, arts, history, religion, customs and society, and these were regarded in the past and are still regarded highly by scholars within and outside the nation.

Tibet's traditional decorative designs and patterns, which belong to the study of craftsmanship (*bzo rig pa*), one of the five major traditional fields of study according to traditional Buddhist classification, have a long history. The decorative designs and patterns are various, elaborate, widely used, beautiful on sight, and colourful, and they have strong national features. Likewise, the materials used for decorative designs are various, including brocade, various types of cotton, paper, powdered colour, wood, gold, silver, copper, iron, turquoise, corals, pearls, and types of nephrite. In terms of creating style, there are paintings, carvings, works produced by casting, forging, relief carvings, embroidery, sewing, patchwork and so on. All these works are guided by painting and they are inseparable from the painting arts. So decoration is a term combining the meaning of both ornamentation and drawing.

1

What I am going to discuss here are the decoration and the patterns that can be found on *rlung rta* or prayer flags, which have a very long history and are most widely used. The use of the *rlung rta* in Tibet gradually developed since the teachings of *g.yung drung* Bon were introduced. It is clearly stated in some Bon historical texts that the rituals of worshiping the deities of *rlung rta* originated with the introduction of the Bon religion. The pictures and decoration on rlung rta are widely found in Tibetan daily life, and symbolize the deepest thoughts of the Tibetan people. Whatever virtuous actions are done by Tibetans, they always set up prayer flags with some decorations and pictures on mountain passes, on the peaks of mountains, on cairns, and on the roofs of houses, or else small pieces of papers decorated with pictures of *rlung rta* are tossed into the sky. There is no need for me to elaborate on these customs here.

Prior to the propagation of Buddhism in our snow land, *g.yung drung* Bon had become the main religion in which the Tibetans reposed their heartfelt requests and the only one in which our people took refuge for the sake of present and future lives. The custom of setting up prayer flags also gradually developed from that time, and the content of prayer flags has been enriched throughout the centuries. In the centre of the prayer flag is an 'excellent horse' with wind-wings and strong power and on the horse there is a saddle and bridle inlaid with jewels; in the middle of the saddle is a wish-fulfilling gem with eight corners and flaming light. On each of the four corners, there are four images of animals including a tiger, a lion, a *garuḍa* and a dragon. This way of decorating *rlung rta* spread all over the Tibetan inhabited areas. It can be clearly seen from the development of Tibetan history that this decoration has further deepened the consciousness and way of thinking of Tibetan people. There is no doubt that the decoration of *rlung rta* is one of the most ancient traditions and that Tibetan people themselves innovated it.

According to my investigation into the origin of the term *rlung rta*, there is no doubt that it is a derivative term. *Rlung* means air, which pervades all of space. Because of this spacious air, human beings, animals and all plants are able to grow and live. It is a law that no person can live once they are separated from this air element. From this point of view, it is clear that the air is the most important among the four elements. *Rta* refers to the intelligent horse that perceives the thoughts of other beings and that brings you to whichever place you want to go; it also indicates great speed. Therefore, people draw the horse on the prayer flags in order to symbolize the idea that people will accomplish whatever they wish to do without any obstacles and to increase their good fortune. As for the explanation of the four animals designed on the four corners of the prayer flag, it is said that some scholars argue that they are symbolic of victory and fearlessness since these four animals have the power and skills to overcome and defeat all the other animals, and I think that this could be possible. However, according to my viewpoint, it is better if one views these animals as symbolic of the four elements since the ancient Bon religion believed that the four elements and the five elements are essential for both the outer and the inner worlds. Tigers living in the forest symbolize the wood element and the 'descendant' of wood is fire according to Tibetan astronomy, and, in addition, the colour of the tiger is red like fire. So it symbolizes the fire

element. The colour of the lion is white, with a reddish mane; because it lives in the snow and on mountains, it symbolizes the earth element.

The painting of the lion with a turquoise coloured mane that we can see in Tibetan painting was developed through imitation of the Chinese way of painting a lion at the time of the founding of Sman bla Don grub's school of painting during the 15th century. Prior to that there had been a tradition in both the Nepalese and Byi'u sgang's schools in Tibet of painting red-yellowish lions with thin and long tails, and with many hairs at the tip of the tail. This can be seen in some old murals and *thang kas*. The great Garuḍa, maroon in colour and with red-yellowish hairs, appears with a human body as its upper part, a bird's body as its lower part, the head of a vulture (*rgod*), and an iron beak. There are flames coming from the top of its horns and it has powerful wings. As it lives hovering in the air, it represents the fire element. The blue dragon, looking very powerful, with a body the length of a long snake, has four legs and hands, and holds jewels in its hands. Its head looks like that of a horse with horns, its mane is red-yellowish in colour and stands up. It lives in the ocean and symbolizes the iron element. The great expanse of air is pervasive everywhere and represents the space element. These are the symbolic values of each element and its function.

Such functions remove all the defilements of human beings, collect all the excellent accumulations, and change all bad omens into auspiciousness. The precious horse endowed with a saddle and a bridle inlaid with various precious jewels has in the middle of the saddle a gem with eight corners and flaming light that fulfills all wishes. So the precious horse symbolizes the rapid fulfillment of all the wishes of human beings. This clearly shows the meaning and significance of the *rlung rta*. The ancient Tibetan people viewed increase or decrease in their lifespan, merits, power and the prosperity of their region as fully dependent on the rise and fall of the four elements. The decorations and patterns on the *rlung rta* therefore clearly represent the wishes and the attitudes of Tibetan people towards the outer world. Gradually, these have become a social custom among Tibetans and have remained till today.

2

The religious king Srong btsan sgam po married two princesses, from Nepal and China respectively, and the princesses brought two different statues of Śākyamuni to Tibet as their dowries. At the same time, many temples known as the *mtha' 'dul* ("subduing the perimeters") and yang 'dul ("additonal subduing") were built in different parts of Tibet, including the Jo khang,[1] the Ra mo che, and Khra 'brug. Thon mi Sambhoṭa created the Tibetan script and later Buddhist texts were translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan. As a result of these events, Buddhism spread in Tibet. Subsequently, various decorative designs or patterns with Buddhist themes gradually developed in Tibet. Nevertheless, the pictures on the prayer flags originated with the Bon religion, and they reflect the deepest thoughts and customs of the Tibetans. Buddhists kept the original patterns found in the Bon prayer flags but added the decoration and design of their Eight Auspicious Symbols. The reason for adding these new designs was to increase auspiciousness and successfulness and to share all the glorious prosperity among all people. The Tibetans' great affection for this design has not been without reason. Since the development of Buddhism in Tibet, Tibetan beliefs and faith changed gradually, and Tibetans came to love decoration and patterns depicting Buddhist themes. Not only did they put the Eight Auspicious Symbols on their prayer flags, but they painted them on the walls of monasteries and temples, in villages and private houses. This is visible everywhere. I will now introduce the significance and representation of each of the Eight Auspicious Symbols and the method of making them. The *Bkra shis brtsegs pa*, a Mahāyāna *sūtra*, states, "I prostrate to the head that is protected by an auspicious parasol, the body protected by the auspicious and immortal victory banner (*rgyal mtshan*), the speech that is endowed by the auspicious religious conch shell with the clockwise spiral, the heart shining with the glorious knot (*dpal be'u*), the eyes with the auspicious golden jewel fish, the tongue with a flourishing lotus flower, the neck with the auspicious jewel vase, the hand with the auspicious gem symbolizing knowledge, and the feet by the auspicious wheel symbolizing good

[1] The full name of the Jo khang is Ra sa 'Phrul snang, referring to the appearance of that miraculous temple on the pond that was filled by a goat by carrying earth on her back. A distance measurement, equivalent to about 8 kilometers.

deeds. The Eight Auspicious Symbols are the excellence of all that is glorious. May the auspicious symbols consisting of the eight objects bring peace and excellence for all time!" Likewise, the auspicious parasol is placed at the top of the design as an ornament. The white parasol with a golden handle, decorated by billowing silks and with a jewelled crown, symbolizes removing the ignorance of all beings and completing the accumulation of merit and wisdom. The two fishes are put there to represent the beauty of the eyes. The fishes with colourful stripes on their backs, fins, round eyes with beautiful light, and with their elegant movements, symbolize the giving of the wisdom eye to each human being.

The great golden vase is placed on the neck as an ornament. The golden vase, filled with the nectar of immortality and with the power of endless treasures, symbolizes the placing of all beings into the stage of ripening and liberation and the effortless fulfillment of the wishes of all beings and without leaving even a single poor being behind.

The lotus is an ornament representing the tongue. With its multicoloured and flourishing branches and leaves that send pleasant smells in all the ten directions, and surrounded by a cloud of bees, it symbolizes restraining oneself from all the non-virtuous deeds of speech such as telling lies and spreading rumours. Instead, it symbolizes speaking gently and tenderly, as a result of having tasted all the nectars of knowledge and from being free from any obstacles in debating and speaking.

The white conch shell is an ornament representing speech. The conch shell of religion, with the spiral turning in a clockwise direction, has the marks of forty "excellent" teeth arranged on it like a rosary. It spreads auspicious sounds in the ten directions and provides people wiht endless happiness as it is played, symbolizing the sixty kinds of melodious speech (*gsung dbyangs yan lag drug bcu*).

The *śrīvatsa* or endless knot (*dpal be'u*) in the centre of the *rlung rta* is an ornament representing the heart. This precious *śrīvatsa* has the nature of shining in a multitude of colours. It represents attaining the stage of omniscience without encountering obstacles and is symbolic of obtaining in one's mind all the ten perfections, each of which is as profound as the ocean. The victory banner is designed as an ornament representing the body. The victory banner, comprising offering silks of five different colours, is adorned with a necklace of multifarious precious objects. It is inlaid with a crown of precious gems that fulfills effortlessly all needs and wishes, and is a symbol that the

Buddha's teaching lasts even for one hundred eons, and that it overcomes all rivalries and enmity. It possesses all aspects of beauty, attracts the heart once seen, and leads to obtaining a noble body that is three times the size of that of ordinary people. The wheel is designed as the ornament of the Buddhas' hands and feet. A wheel pattern appears naturally on the soles of the Tathāgatas' feet and on the palms of their hands. It is a symbol for the cutting of ignorance of the mesh-like existence, disproving all the tïrthikas' incorrect viewpoints, increasing splendor, enjoyment and fame, and placing all beings at the stage of ripening and liberation.

The decorations and patterns of the Eight Auspicious Symbols are not only used on prayer flags, but also on many other objects. For instance, they can be found on furniture (*cha sgam*), altars, cooking utensils, walls, and so on. It is a form of decoration that is visible everywhere.

Although all the uses of the same symbols found on different objects have the same meaning, the way of painting them and their artistic features are not the same at all. There are three ways of painting the Eight Auspicious Symbols in terms of the degree of elaboration that is used. These include vase-shaped designs of the Eight Symbols, doubled designs and dispersed designs. A painter would achieve excellent results depending on individual skills. Since the methods for mmaking dyes, creating different hues, showing lines and arranging the background vary, results will be different too. Techniques vary according to the material employed. For example, the Eight Auspicious Symbol may be made of butter for offerings, whereas embroidery is used for the design when it is found on tents, carving is used for wooden objects, relief-carving is used for copper and golden objects, and painting is used on walls.

3

During the gradual development and further establishment of Buddhism in our land, the Land of Snows, the Seven Auspicious Royal Symbols were added to the prayer flag. The *Bkra shis brtsegs pa* mentioned above states:

> The precious wheel, without obstacles and unbroken, is an auspicious symbol! May it bring peace and excellence to these days! The precious

> elephant, which is a powerful and great vehicle is an auspicious symbol. May it bring peace and excellence to these days! The precious horse, which is clever and strong, is an auspicious symbol. May it bring peace and excellence to these days! The precious minister who reigns over all is an auspicious symbol. May this bring peace and excellence! The precious general who defeats all rivals with incorrect viewpoints is an auspicious symbol. May this bring peace and excellence to these days! The precious queen who gives birth to all is an auspicious symbol. May this bring peace and excellence to these days! The precious gem that fulfills and accomplishes all wishes is an auspicious symbol. May it bring peace and excellence to these days!

I believe that the Seven Auspicious Royal Symbols were added to the design of prayer flags as auspicious symbols only during the second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet. Here I will briefly explain their significance and symbolic meaning.

According to Buddhist tradition, they were the first seven kinds of gems that arose by the power of the merits of the *cakra*—the wheel symbolizing a universal monarch living in the excellent time between the era when a human life span was incalculable and the era when it was 80,000 years long. It is said that during the former eon, by the power of the merits of the *cakra* monarchs, a golden wheel with one thousand spokes was found in the river of Jambu, led the way to the places to which the king wished to go. It fulfilled the wishes of the king, and whatever territories the king wished to rule would come under his rule because of the wheel's magical power. At the same time, all the material assets necessary for the royal administration would come together with the territories.

The precious elephant, gray in colour, with six tusks and with the strength of over one thousand ordinary elephants, has a gem crown on the top of its head, and its body is endowed with decorative jewels (*dra ba dra phyed*). It has the ability to move extremely fast, and can go around the earth three times a day just like the elephant that was ridden by Indra.

The precious horse is beautiful to see, of a pleasant blue colour, like indigo. Its sound can be heard by everyone throughout the world, and it can make three circles around the earth within a day just like the precious elephant. The horse, as strong as the wind, carries the king to the places where he wishes to go in a single moment.

The precious minister, whose intelligence is as glorious as that of Brahmā's, is incomparable in supporting the king's rule, accomplishing

all the tasks and wants of the king in a single moment even without asking him to do so. His merits are even greater than those of Vaiśravaṇa, who is the most generous in the world.

The precious general whom no one dares to compete with in terms of bravery and heroic skills, is adroit in strategy in battles. He leads four divisions of military troops and frightens his enemies at the moment he moves his sword. He never surrenders to his enemies and makes it impossible for them to have any chance or capacity to defeat him. His power is as mighty as that of King Virūḍhaka in the south.

The precious queen, the sight of whom never leads to disharmony, looks very beautiful and attractive. She is free of the eight faults of a woman and endowed with the five kinds excellent knowledge. She gives the utmost happiness when she is touched and has the ability to shame even the most beautiful goddesses in the heavens.

The precious gem is blue in colour and has the nature of pure light. Its light spreads about eighty *dpag tshad* away from the place where the gem is, and as a result there is no difference between day and night in this area. It has the power to make all beings share their possessions and wealth as they wish, and there is not even the idea of a single poor person remaining in poverty. The decorative pattern of the seven auspicious symbols does not only appear on prayer flags, but also on the walls of monasteries, temples, palaces, and private houses, as well as on the various items used for making offerings (*mchod pa'i nyer spyad*). But the ways in which these are painted and sculpted depends completely on the intelligence, characteristics, and skills of each artist. In summary, Tibetans regard the prayer flags that are widely used throughout the Tibetan inhabited areas as a symbol of auspiciousness and bringing success to everything. From my point of view, although after the introduction of Buddhism several Buddhist elements were added to the original designs on the prayer flags that had come from the ancient religion of *g.yung drung* Bon, these did not change the essence of the prayer flags, which still represent the meaning given to them by Bon. It is just like a person from the East who, although he might wear western clothes, will never possibly become a westerner. On the other hand, the adding of patterns with Buddhist content on the prayer flags made the decorative design on the *rlung rta* more elaborate. On this point, one can see the identical features shared by Bon and Buddhism. Thirdly, no matter whether one follows the Bon religion or Buddhism, the devotees of both accept and use prayer flags. The above is a short

analysis of the origin, characteristics, and historical development of the decorative patterns on Tibetan *rlung rta*. Because the level of my knowledge is very low, there must be many mistakes and incorrect points of view in this paper. I hope that those great and impartial scholars and experts who work in the field of Tibetology will give me valuable advice in correcting these errors.

THE RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF *ZAN PAR*

ZARA FLEMING

The aim of this paper is to introduce the wooden moulds known as *zan par* and to explore their ritual significance. *Zan par* are used to create small effigies of dough as scapegoats (*glud*), to give as offerings to propitiate evil spirits or to please the deities. In order to understand the concept of *zan par*, one needs to bear in mind the Tibetans' belief in the sanctity of their landscape, inhabited by both gods and demons. Prior to the advent of Buddhism, both the indigenous folk religion and the Bon practised a form of shamanism and performed a series of rituals in order to cope with the natural and supernatural forces at work in their hostile environment (Dowman 1997: 9–15).

Initially, many of these rituals involved the use of sacrifice to appease the spirit world. Early evidence for this is found in the eighth century Dunhuang manuscripts and in Bonpo literature (Lalou 1952: 339–61). The animal (or in some cases human) would act as a scapegoat (*glud*) or offering to the deities. The practice of transferring evil to another being or scapegoat is common to many cultures around the world, but it was particularly widespread in Tibet (Stein 1971: 236–40). After Buddhism was proclaimed as the state religion of Tibet (c.779 CE), these rituals were actively discouraged, as living sacrifice was considered contrary to the Buddha'a teachings. Instead various forms of non-violent offerings were introduced as symbolic substitutes.

Chief amongst these are the *gtor ma* or sacrificial cakes made of dough. The idea of *gtor ma* originated from the Indian offering known as *bali*, food offerings made of rice, fruit or sweets. In Tibet, *rtsam pa* (roasted barley ground into flour) is mixed with water or milk to make the dough for *gtor ma*. The word *gtor ma* derives from *gtor ba*, to cast away, break up or scatter. This conveys the Buddhist notion of giving without attachment and the *gtor ma* itself is often broken up or scattered at the end of a ritual. But in addition to *gtor ma*, other scapegoat substitutes made of dough were used as offerings, after the introduction of Buddhism.

There is reference to this in Ye shes mtsho rgyal's biography of Padmasambhava:

> All Bon rites containing unwholesome aspects were abolished to prevent immediate evil. The Bon were ordered to construct stags' heads with branching antlers out of wood, and yak and sheep statuettes out of dough. (Butler 1996: 40)

The Bonpos claim it was the founder of their religion, Ton pa Shen rab (ston pa gShen rab), who initiated the tradition of dough offerings as substitutes for sacrificial animals many centuries earlier. Although there is no early written evidence to support this, it can safely be said that both *gtor ma* and dough effigies are of Indic origin and were being used in Tibet by the 8th century. Whether the *zan par* was in existence at this time is not known, and the earliest example I have managed to source only dates from the Ming dynasty (Jian/Zheng 2003: 306–11). The *zan par* is usually 20–30 centimetres long (plate 82) but there are shorter and longer varieties. Some are flat wooden boards carved on two sides, whilst others are four, six or eight-sided and carved all over. The flat boards often come in a set attached with a leather thong, so that they can be fanned out (colour plate 83; Bellino 1999: 32–33). The moulds vary in content and some are occasionally named according to the images they represent. The use of the *zan par* appears to be widespread throughout the Tibetan cultural and religious domain and in both the Bon and Buddhist traditions (particularly amongst the Rnying ma pa).

The wood selected for making the *zan par* is usually birch, as this is considered the easiest for carving. However, *zan par* made of hazel, walnut and fruit woods are also found. Traditionally, monks made the *zan par*, but in practice this work is often carried out by skilled lay craftsmen. The method employed in carving a *zan par* is a similar technique to that used in carving *rlung ta* or prayer flag blocks (Dagyab 1977: 58–59). Designs are drawn on paper, and then stuck onto the wood with a light flour paste. This is left to dry and then the initial outline is carved through the template, or occasionally the paper is peeled off leaving an imprint. The wood is moistened before further detailed carving. The tools used are varying sizes of burins or gravers with oblique ends. In the case of cruder *zan par*, the designs appear to be carved freehand.

The making of *zan par* images (and *gtor ma*) is a devotional act, and as such requires the right motivation and spiritual preparation. The appropriate prayers should be recited and the monk or craftsman creating the images often wear a mask over the mouth, so as not to pollute the finished product. The mould itself is lightly coated with butter, *rtsam pa* dough is then pressed into the mould to create the miniature images. The flour is consecrated before use, auspicious ingredients often being added to please the deity being propitiated (sweet substances for peaceful images, spicier ingredients for wrathful ones). It may also be coloured, depending on the nature of the ritual and the requirement of the texts. Peaceful *gtor ma* are generally coloured white, whilst red colouring is used for wrathful deities to symbolise blood. The *gtor ma* ingredients for some wrathful tantric deities include meat and alcohol, but this practice is prohibited within the Dge lugs tradition (Beer 2000: 321).

Many *zan par* have a small file (*gzong*) attached and a piece of metal (*rin chen bdar*) (plate 84) consisting of an alloy of the five precious metals (*rin chen lnga*), gold, silver, copper, brass and iron. During the preparation of the dough, a little metal powder is filed off into the *rtsam pa* mixture, in order to represent the treasures being offered to the deity in whose honour the ceremony is being performed. The votive image of dough is then applied to a *gtor ma* or used independently.

The forms represented on *zan par* are exceedingly diverse and often show great dexterity in carving, especially in their depiction of the animal kingdom. Many of them seem to reflect the ancient animal style, which originated in Scythia and then gradually spread into Central Asia. There are representations of birds, beasts, reptiles, insects and fish, which are divided according to the tripartite cosmological division of the realm (plate 85). Mention should also be made of the mythological, magical and hybrid animals included, many of which serve as mounts for the wrathful protective deities or *dgra lha*.

There are countless representations of deities (*lha*) and demons (*bdud*), those that rule over the sky (*lha*), those that reign on the land (*sa bdag*) or those that control the underworld (*klu*). The list of subdivisions is too expansive to detail, but includes *dgra lha*, *dregs*, *btsan ma*, *the'u rang* and *gnyan*; all sharing the feature of being venerated and

feared as real powers. The figures are represented as human, animal or bird-headed, standing on foot or riding various animals. Many of these belong to the pre-Buddhist mythological world and its pantheon, but some are local deities included in the Bon and Buddhist traditions. There are specific groups of protective deities (*dgra lha*) for each different community, for example the farming population venerate the gods of the fields (*zhing lha*). The dress and mounts of these deities indicate the pastoral or warlike nature of their corresponding social strata. Dressed in armour, they ride wild animals and often carry shamanic equipment (Fleming 2001: 210).

Frequently represented are the demons connected with the four cardinal directions (*bdud bzhi*) who carry their respective symbols of sword, flower, jewel and wheel (plate 86). Variations on this theme include demons who hold a snare in their right hand, whilst the attributes in their left differ. The latter often include the magic notched stick of the Bonpos (*khram shing*), triangular pennant, knife or sword and the Bon musical instrument (*gshang*) (Fárkas/Szabó 2002: 92–101). Other images depicted are the various attributes and accoutrements of deities and demons, as well as different kinds of peaceful and wrathful *gtor ma*. Mention must also be made of the occasional use of minute inscriptions, which accompany these images, identifying the name or type of obstacle to be overcome and the cardinal direction in which the image is to be placed.

There is a wealth of offerings depicted—the offerings to the senses, the eight auspicious emblems, the seven precious gems, the symbols of the elements (plate 87), the twelve cyclic animals, the planets that rule the seven days of the week together with the raven's head of the eclipse planet, Rāhu, the eight divination trigrams (*spar kha*), the astrological tortoise and the magic square (*sme ba*). There are also minute representations of Buddhas and talismans, (*jim bzo'i bcha lag*) which are sometimes affixed with glue to an officiating lama's face, in order to influence a ceremony in an auspicious way (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 363). Astrology and divination play a very important role in the choice of images used in the various rituals.

The profusion of designs found on these *zan par* are reminiscent to two particular types of Tibetan banner. Firstly the *rgyan tshogs* (set of ornaments) which depicts the attributes, clothing and accoutrements of the protector deities, rather than their full iconographic form; and secondly the *bskang rdzas* (material for the banquet) which depicts vari-

ous offering sacraments, ritual objects and a great variety of gifts. Both the banners and the *zan par* illustrate in a similar way, everything which one can possibly offer to a deity. The offerings in the paintings are visualised and created in the mind, but through the *zan par* actual three dimensional images are created which serve not only as offerings, but also as ritual substitutes (*glud*) when rites of exorcism are employed.

The images created in a *zan par* are a form of miniature *gtor ma*, which are used in a wide variety of rituals, primarily to manipulate external reality. In the tantric tradition, the offering of *gtor ma* is indispensable, whether the ritual is directed towards manipulating changes on a mundane level or directed towards the aspiration to enlightenment. Through the offering of *gtor ma*, it is believed that significant accomplishments are attained and obstructions on the path to enlightenment are removed.

Typical accomplishments sought through making offerings to a deity, would be to gain merit and to increase health, wealth and prosperity. Obstructions could be adverse weather conditions, physical as well as psychological illnesses and all kinds of havoc. These negative forces need to be controlled, by placating the demons through the offering of a *glud* or scapegoat. The successful practitioner of a specific ritual is believed to be able to gain the powers of the deity and then manipulate the outer world to his satisfaction.

The *zan par* images are used on an altar, often affixed to a large *gtor ma* or in conjunction with a threadcross (*nam mkha'*). The latter is a simple or complex construction of coloured threads, which can represent two different objects. The first is the palatial abode of a deity in its heavenly surroundings. The second is a web, into which evil spirits are enticed by specific offerings and become entangled. Both structures use images created in a *zan par*, according to the instructions of the specific rituals laid down in the texts (Snellgrove 1967: 91–95). The dough images are arranged in tiers (according to type) on the completed threadcross construction (*mdos*). The lama then performs the appropriate ritual invoking the various deities to enter into the images and into the threadcross. Finally, the whole structure is burnt or cast away at a crossroads, thus symbolically removing all negativity (Beyer 1978: 318–59).

The most common rituals are those to avert sickness or other misfortunes to a household. Sometimes large effigies of the afflicted person

are made, often containing their nail clippings and hair. But usually images from the *zan par* are used, representing individual men, women, children, monks and nuns or a whole family together (plate 88). The identifying male and female symbols are the arrow (*mda' bkra*) and the spindle (*'phang bkra*) (Norbu 1995: 79). A religious or lay practitioner would then perform a ritual, to encourage the disease (or the demon causing it) to enter the substitute scapegoat (*glud*). A *gtor ma* offering including this figure would then be carried away from the household, thereby symbolically removing the sickness. This is similar in idea to the wooden ritual sticks (*shing ri*) decorated with pictures of the household, often found above Tibetan doorways to ward off evil.

In the case of a particularly violent death, caused by murder, suicide, accident or war, the ritual uses an image for exorcism known as a *liṅga*. This is a Sanskrit word meaning 'mark' or 'sign', translated into Tibetan as *msthan* or *rtags*. However, when the Sanskrit term is used, it means a representative figure used in tantric rituals. The *liṅga* stands on its own, alternatively it may be encased in a circular or triangular form (Karmay 1998: 72).

Victims of violent death are trapped by extreme suffering and fear, unable to move on through the process of rebirth. The *liṅga* or dough effigy serves as a substitute for the victim, chained and immovable because of the excess suffering. Seed syllables and mantras mark the body and surround the figure, increasing the potency of the *glud* (plate 89). The lama performs a complex ritual to separate the victim's "mental" body from the death experience; the whole *gtor ma* is then burnt. If no trace is left, the ritual has been successful, but if any part of the offering has escaped the fire the ritual needs to be repeated. The *liṅga* is also used in many other rituals, some for ransom and some for destruction.

There are many different community events where *zan par* images are used, for example the *lha bzangs* ceremonies, performed to please the deities and placate the demons of a particular area. This normally takes place on a mountain; offerings of incense and numerous miniature dough effigies accompany the tying of new *rlung rta* or prayer flags in order to bring benefit to the community (plate 90). During springtime infections are prevalent, so a special *garuḍa* image is created in a *zan par*, to ward off sickness. There are also many rituals performed for the farming community, when the lords of the earth (*sa bdag*) are propitiated to ensure good harvests, disease-free crops and

healthy livestock. In the latter, dough effigies of water creatures, fish, turtles, tadpoles and snakes are common. These rituals have their origins in the ancient pre-Buddhist veneration of the local spirits of a region, and in their respect for the seats of ancestral deities.

Mention must also be made of the *brgya bzhi* or 400 ceremony, a very common ritual to avert negative forces. According to tradition, this was first performed by the Buddha himself when Indra had fallen ill due to four evil forces and asked the Buddha for assistance. This involves the use of 400 clay objects—100 of one type for each evil force. Frequently used are combinations of 100 of the following—*mchod rten* (*stūpa*), *mar me* (butter lamps), *gtor ma* (ransom cakes) and morsels of food for the deities. For this ceremony, various dough images representing humans, animals, sacrifical objects and ritual implements (plate 91) are made with the help of a *zan par*. In addition, a drawing of the Buddha's hand is often incorporated into the offering. Countless other rituals requiring *zan par* images occur during important times in the calendar year, such as at the end of the year. On the 29th of the last month, all the negative thoughts and evil actions that have accumulated over the year are symbolically expelled from each household, through the use of *glud*. The threadcross contraption is then carried out of the house to a cross roads, but it is vitally important that the person carrying the offering should not look back—or the evil spirits may return.

In conclusion the significance of the *zan par* as a ritual tool cannot be underestimated. The images created from it are in essence, miniature *gtor ma*. Although a number of larger *gtor ma* could perhaps perform a similar role, it is not always possible to find enough materials or have the financial wherewithal to create a full range. Also the *zan par* can be easily transported whilst travelling, in order to perform rituals as and when they are needed. In the course of my research, I have seen many examples in public and private collections—but it has to be said that they are often catalogued wrongly. I have come across *zan par* labelled as American Indian prescription sticks, Sumatran divination boards and even as European marzipan moulds! In the course of this short presentation, I have only scratched at the surface of what is to me a fascinating subject matter. There is clearly much more research that remains to be done, not least a comprehensive catalogue of the different types of *zan par* relating to the Bon and Buddhist rituals in which they are used.

I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable criticism, encouragement and inspiration of Robert Beer, Franco Bellino, Paddy Booz, Erberto Lo Bue, Edward Henning, Gyurme Dorje, the Venerable Karma Khedup and Hans Roth in the preparation of this paper on *zan par*.

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

82. A six-sided *zan par*. (Photo: F. Bellino)
*83. Set of *zan par* moulds with leather thong attached. (Photo: F. Bellino)
84. The *rin chen bdar*, made of five precious metals. (Photo: Z. Fleming)
85. The animal kingdom. (Photo: Z. Fleming)

86. The *bdud bzhi*. (Photo: Z. Fleming)
87. The four elements. (Photo: Z. Fleming)
88. The household. (Photo: F. Bellino)
89. The *liṅga*. (Photo: F. Bellino)
90. Depiction of monks. (Photo: Z. Fleming)
91. Ritual implements. (Photo: Z. Fleming)

NON-SCULPTURAL METALWORKING IN EASTERN TIBET 1930–2003

JOHN CLARKE

This paper is drawn from older accounts of the area, from interviews held from the late 1980s onwards with Khampa craftsmen in exile in India and as a result of recent fieldwork in the region itself. I want here to outline the economic structure within which the metalworkers of Khams operated, to look at regional centres of importance, their products and at questions of style in the area.

Throughout Tibet and the Tibetanised western Himalayas the majority of metalworkers were part-time craftsmen with a main occupation as farmers. Metal was worked at times of the year when there were few agricultural demands, mainly in the winter. The same set up also operated in Dbus and Gtsang but what was different there were the presence of numbers of full time specialised metalworkers in the larger towns and cities. This situation was made viable by ever changing pilgrim populations, very large monasteries and in Lhasa itself by the residence of the Tibetan nobility and government.

In Khams there were virtually no centres of population comparable to Dbus and Gtsang and metalworkers operated within tiny farming villages. In the early 20th century Oliver Coales wrote that the largest villages had hardly more than twenty houses in them.[1] In Khams, as in Dbus and Gtsang, villages of craftsmen were sited near to important monasteries or political centres and to significant trade routes. Sde dge Dgon kyher was home to the king of Sde dge until 1909, and seat of the Sa skya monastery, Dgon chen, with the nearby famous printing house. Brag g.yab, Li thang and Chab mdo all had important monasteries, while Sde dge Spa yul was close to the Kha tog dgon pa, and Kar ma-with its painters and metalworkers-in Kar ma Sgyas ru to a large Kar ma Bka 'brgyud pa monastery. The proximity of sources of metal ores, copper at Le near 'Ba' thang and at Gong kha gling near Li thang, and

[1] In 1917 Sde dge Dgon khyer, the capital, had six houses, two palaces and its monastery (Coales 1919: 241).

iron near Brag g.yab and Chab mdo, must also be noted as probable factors in the location of centres.

The craftsmen farmers of Khams mainly worked in extended farming families and where there were enough male members it was possible for one or more to devote themselves full time to metalworking. But more commonly they also remained farmers, which could lead to conflicts of interest when demand for work was heavy. Rather than turning down lucrative orders at busy agricultural times of the year, it was common to try to manage with female family members and children or even to hire in labour. But it would be wrong to assume that part-time working meant that workers were less skilled for, as everyone knows, the reputation of Khams for the best quality bronze bell casting, silver, gold and copper work and the best decorated ironwork was maintained right down to 1959.

The consensus amongst the Khams pa craftsmen interviewed and a view shared by earlier travellers and anthropologists was that Sde dge, as an area, produced the finest products in Khams in all metals and across most types of work, both cast and beaten. By judiciously acknowledging the political dominance of China the principality of Sde dge, covering 78,000 square kilometres, had been able to remain virtually independent until 1865, when the Lhasa government gained control over it. In 1909 China intervened in a succession dispute between the king and his brother which led to the monarch's dethronement and his brother's flight. The former kingdom was then divided into five new Chinese administrative units until in 1955 it was finally incorporated into the Sichuan Province. In 1891 William Woodville Rockhill and in 1917 Oliver Coales noted that Sde dge's saddles, sword blades and scabbards, bells and brass and copper teapots were prized throughout Tibet (Rockhill 1895: 692, 712, Coales 1919: 241). In the late 19th century a Sde dge sword could fetch the very large sum at the time of $150 to $200 (Rockhill 1895: 712). Sde dge Dgon khyer was itself a place of production turning out teapots, guns, swords, spears, inlaid saddles and other iron-work (Sandberg 1906: 157).

A key area of small scattered villages of metalworkers was Sde dge Hor po, until 1909 one of the twenty five Rdzong khag or districts of the former state. The town of Hor po, also known as Hor po ro ba, was one of its pre-eminent centres and the chief town of the same Rdzong khag. It was here that the skills of overlaying silver and gold onto the roughened surface of iron, sometimes called damascening, were most

fully developed. Here too some of the best pierced iron products, particularly saddles and pen cases made by the technique called *lcags bkrol*, were made. Exiled craftsmen have upheld Hor po's reputation as a centre for the production of this type of ironwork of the finest quality. They list its products as knives (*gri*), swords (*dar*), saddles (*rta sga*), stirrups (*yob*), bridles and bits (*srab*), tinder pouches (*me lcags*), pen cases (*smyug sprog*), and teapots (*ke pu li*). Craftsmen also identify the round beer or water flasks called (*sbas leb*) which are damascened with dragons and auspicious emblems in silver, gold and sometimes copper, as having been made in the area, though Chab mdo was also well known as a source of these vessels (Clarke 1995, vol. 1: 163). Such flasks continued to be made into the 1940s though latterly they were produced in silver or copper rather than in iron. According to Veronika Ronge's informants, Sde dge Hor po was also the best source of cast bronze objects, bells, *rdo rje*s and vessels, while Teichman drew attention to the excellence of its silverwork (Teichman 1922: 171, Ronge 1978: 146). Informants from the village said that until 1909 the king of Sde dge required ironworkers from there to give part of their time to produce finished metal products as part of their annual "hand tax" (*lag khral*) in a similar manner to that of metalworkers at Sa skya. They also believed that periods spent working for the king could sometimes extend into years.[2] Several Khams pa informants also thought that the excellence of Sde dge work related to this long term royal patronage.[3]

South of Sde dge along the Ngul Chu, a tributary of the Yangtse, was the important ironworking village of Sde dge Spa yul, its list of products being virtually the same as that of Sde dge Hor po. Like Sde dge Hor po and Brag g.yab it was well known for tinder pouches or *me lcags*. Also to the south of Sde dge Dgon khyer, 70 kilometres down the Yangstse (Dre chu) lay Apishang or Apinang, a centre of excellence for ritual objects, swords and women's jewellery. Apishang is the usual pronunciation of this name by the present day inhabitants of the village while older craftsmen in exile tend to call it Apinang.[4] Khams pa and Amdo wa informants also commented on the high quality of Sde dge

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2 Personal communication from Mr Brian McElney.

3 It is also possible that the similarities in tax system, unusual in relation to metalworking in Tibet, may the result of the ancient links of Sde dge to Sa skya itself (Clarke: 2002: 119–20).

4 Probably the same as Ngenang (Aipa) marked on a map of eastern Tibet by Eric Teichman though this is indicated as lying on the Dzi chu which runs into the Yangtse (Teichman, 1919a: 247).

silverwork (Clarke 1995: vol.1, 164). Apart from Apishang two villages well known for their silver and gold work were Sde dge Ala, near the Kha tog monastery, and An kro, between Sde dge Dgon khyer and Chab mdo.[5]

About 90 kilometres north of Chab mdo, in the area of Kar ma Sgyas ru surrounding the important Kar ma Bka' 'brgyud pa monastery of Kar ma, lay the village of the same name, also sometimes called Pa tin. The village was divided into two halves by a river; on one side lived painters on the other silver and goldworkers making finely embossed products (Trungpa 1979: 86, Clarke 1995, vol.1: 164). Khams pa craftsmen held the view that although Li thang metalworkers made good quality work it was nevertheless inferior to that from Sde dge, a view also held in the late 19th century by Rockhill (Rockhill 1891: 2, 1894: 358, Clarke 1995, vol.1: 163). But an ironworker from Spa yul considered Li thang work as considerably better than that from Chab mdo.

Chab mdo was however important in its own right as a centre of casting and embossing. Ronge's informants gave Chab mdo, together with the neighbouring district of Rdza stod, precedence as a centre of casting (Coales, 1919: 244, Ronge 1978: 118). There were about fifteen craftsmen in the town during the period 1945–50 engaged in making wrought iron, copper, silver and gold embossed objects (Clarke, 1995, vol.1: 163). Two days ride up the Dza Chu from Chab mdo brought one to the village of Da tu renowned for its cast statue production. Brag g.yab in Gon zho state, at the meeting point of the Me Chu, Lab Chu and 'Bom Chu, was famous for its copper and silversmithing. Up to two hundred silversmiths, around twenty goldsmiths and thirty fine ironworkers were in residence during the years 1935–45. The quality of work there was generally higher than that of Chab mdo though not as high as Sde dge. Both Sde dge and Brag g.yab had been occupied by Chinese forces from 1908/09 until 1918, when a treaty returned them to the control of the Tibetan government. After that date however Brag g.yab was more heavily patronized than Sde dge by members of the Tibetan army and government because of a continued large Chinese presence in Sde dge. Brag g.yab was noted for its embossed *ga'u*s, teacups with stand and the sets of banqueting silver called *sgrog rtse*. This set consisted of different sized plates for serving Chinese dishes, small silver cups for *a rag* or spirits and silver spoons of varying sizes

[5] This may be Ad zhod on the Le chu in the Ken jya la valley (Rockhill 1894: 330).

used for eating (Clarke 1995, vol.1: 165). According to metalworking informants, the pierced ironwork for which both Sde dge and Brag g.yab had been famous for centuries was still being executed in both areas in the late 1940s. Large scale use of the technique appears to have tailed off during the decades following the Chinese occupation in 1950. Sho long, a small district within Brag g.yab, was known for its damascened ironwork and during the years 1935–45 there were five or six people there well known for making ornate saddles, gun barrels, locks, tinder pouches and knife cases.

We now turn to the style of the products that have been discussed. There is a remarkable unanimity amongst older Tibetan and Newar craftsmen in their belief that that a coherent and recognisable Khams style of non-sculptural metalworking exists. The other categories of style within such metalwork may be briefly given as Dbus and Gtsang, usually grouped together, a Newar style, the product of Newar craftsmen mostly dwelling in Dbus and Gtsang, a Chinese style, relating to Mongolia and A mdo, and finally a Bhutanese style.[6] Aside from distinctive regional object forms, the criteria metalworkers draw attention to as stylistic determinants are the *Bkra shis rtags brgyad* or Eight Auspicious Emblems of Buddhism, *pa tra* or scrollwork and the *tsi pa ṭa* or Face of Glory. These vary subtly, though noticeably, according to the area of production of an object. It is possible to give a brief sketch of Khams style as it reveals itself on copper, silver and ironwork objects.

Plate 92 shows one of the classic forms of Khams scrollwork or *pa tra* which is characteristic of the Sde dge area. Found both on ironwork and silver its dense structure is reminiscent of a woven textile. Its name, *ri pyi shing lo pa tra* or “coiled-spring”, sometimes described as *ri pyi shing lo mgo gnis ma* “two-headed coiled spring” relates to its form. By way of contrast plate 93 represents a Lhasa *pa tra* called *sa lo ma* from a *ga’u* made in Lhasa at the start of the 20th century and another, which is more generally typical of Dbus and Gtsang, from the side of a beer jug (plate 94). Broadly speaking Khams *pa tra* covers an area more densely than that from Dbus and Gtsang, and in Dbus and Gtsang main stems are often more prominent and noticeable.

But, apart from this and dissimilarities in the shape of scrollwork, a major difference lies in the far greater clarity and depth of Khams

[6] On regional styles see Clarke in Singer & Denwood 1997: 278–89, and on style in *ga’u*s see Clarke 2001: 55–65.

embossing over that from other areas. This is the result of a longer working period spent on each surface, a total of seven or eight workings in all, with three or four on each side as opposed to the Dbus and Gtsang average of three workings in total. The effect of this is to produce a much deeper, more three-dimensional modelling and a finer detailing evident in both *pa tra* and in the Eight Auspicious Emblems or indeed in any emblems portrayed. These differences are clearly seen in a comparison between the *Bkra shis rtags brgyad* on the *ga'u* from Khams (plate 95) and on the two objects from Dbus or Gtsang (plates 93 and 94). Individual symbols are much more detailed in the Khams piece, for example the pleats of cloth in the umbrella are shown quite convincingly (top) whereas in the other example (bottom left) everything is much more schematic and sketchy. Although the embossing is relatively clear on the Dbus and Gtsang pieces, the depth of definition is less marked and the emblems are not as well delineated as on Khams objects. In a few instances there are major differences between symbols from area to area. For example the "Golden Fish" (*Gser nya*), emblem in Khams is shown with the two fish's heads facing each other in the downwards direction while in Dbus and Gtsang they arch together with heads facing upwards (cf. plates 94 and 95), a feature also found on Newar objects from those areas. Lastly there is the Khams form of the *Tsi pa ṭa* or "Face of Glory" (plate 96) the Tibetan version of the Indian *kîrtimukha*. *Tsi pa ṭa*, the Tibetan name of this emblem,[7] appears to be a transliteration from the Sanskrit word *cipaṭa* meaning "snub nosed" (Martin 1996: 20). The Khams version of the "Face of Glory", sometimes also called the "Monster Mask", has distinctly bushier eyebrows and more facial hair than its counterparts in Central and Southern Tibet (plate 97).

Although this categorization appears at first sight clear and straightforward, there are larger issues surrounding the copying of objects from one area by the craftsmen of another, that complicate the picture. The issue of copying is certainly germane to the present and past role of Chinese metalworkers in Khams. During his visits to Khams in the 1890s Rockhill commented on the importance of peripatetic Chinese

[7] This emblem in Tibet represents an amalgamation of the *kîrtimukha* and the *garuda* (Clarke 2004: 33) and has a number of names, most commonly *Tsi pa ṭa* (Chang 1986: 2186). Other versions include *Dzig mgo pa tra* (Tucci 1966: fig. 3), *Rtsi pa* (Dagyab 1966: 525), *Rdzi 'go pa thra* (Ronge 1980: 270), *Rtsi par* and *Ci mi 'dra* (Helffer 1985: 63), and colloquially *chibar* and *zibag* (Clarke 1995: Vol.1, 290).

metalworkers to the nomads of Khams and A mdo. Today Chinese metalworkers, who are mostly silversmiths from Dali and Hoching in Yunnan, are settled in the majority of the larger towns of Khams and have apparently ousted the Tibetan craftsmen almost completely. This link with Yunnan had been established, according to some informants, by Tibetan traders even before the Chinese invasion of 1950. Traders going down from Sde dge to Shantsien, Zhongdian, Lijiang, Hoching and Dali found that they could get cheap copies of Sde dge metalwork in the last two towns.

One may compare a belt hanger made about ten years ago by a Tibetan craftsman near Sde dge (plate 98) with a piece made recently by a Yunnanese craftsman in Yushu (plate 99). The Chinese craftsman has reproduced the Khams form and stylistic characteristics though the piece cannot even begin to compete with the quality of the Tibetan object. This is quite typical of a large volume of Chinese copies of Khams work, though a range of qualities is also evident and some are considerably better in finish. Plate 100 represents a modern *ga'u* from the same source as the belt hanger and may be compared with an older Tibetan *ga'u* (plate 105).

There is a strong economic reason for the difference in quality between the Tibetan belt hanger and the Chinese one. The Chinese craftsmen seem to have gained their supremacy by making things more cheaply, which has meant sacrificing standards through using methods which cut down the time spent on operations like embossing. Plate 101 reproduces a silver belt plate made by a craftsman in Yushu during 2003 using such methods. Scrolls are not deeply incised but cover domed or bulging protuberances which make them look as if they are more fully worked than they are. Such raised forms are stamped out using a pair of metal dies that fit together. The resultant plate is then laid in a sand mould face down and lead is poured onto it. By this means the craftsman obtains a block of lead with the stamped plate cast into it. The lead acts like traditional pitch to absorb hammer blows during the final chasing of the scrolls. It is noteworthy that economic reasons in most cases determine the quality of pieces and that Chinese silversmiths are often capable of skilled or even very skilled work given more time (and money). The objects that are produced using semi-automatized methods are those that are most in demand, but one may find also examples of the same object types made by hand and to a good standard for those willing to pay more.

Metalworkers from all areas in Tibet, including Newars, are fully aware of the fact that copying crossing stylistic categories has always gone on, but they are equally sure they can discern copies by craftsmen of pieces from outside their stylistic area. Such copies usually reveal small interpolations from the copying craftsman's stylistic vocabulary, slight mishandlings of detail, a reduction in quality through simplification, or a combination of these factors. Newar silversmiths and goldsmiths working in Central and Southern Tibet in the past were in a similar situation to the ethnic Chinese metalworkers in eastern Tibet today. Both groups were/are attempting to copy Tibetan style convincingly, which has resulted in them becoming thoroughly conversant with traditional Tibetan emblems, scrollwork and typical object forms. Just as is the case today with Chinese metalworkers, there was a huge variation in the quality of Newar work produced for Tibetan patrons in the past. At the top end of the range, individual pieces could be as good or even better in some cases than the best Tibetan work itself.

At the lower end of the scale there were pieces produced quickly and cheaply that gave a general impression of authenticity, but whose poor quality would be revealed by a closer inspection. The phenomenon is illustrated by comparing a type of *ga'u* made on the Gtsang border called "Gnya' lam" *ga'u* (plate 102), after the border town of that name, with similar Chinese products. Just like the Chinese copies it is an attempt to give the effect of a Khams *ga'u* at a lower price and is a type associated with Newars. Individual symbols are schematic and the scroll work ill defined, though from a distance it looks effectively rich in finish.

In many cases today's Chinese silversmiths from Yunnan have been living and working continuously in eastern Tibet for more than ten years, providing more than sufficient time to become familiar with local metalwork styles. Nor is the phenomenon of Chinese metalworkers working for Tibetan patrons a recent one only: there are 19th-century reports of both settled and nomadic Chinese smiths supplying Tibetans with weapons, vessels and other metalwares in the eastern border regions. The Chinese Muslim craftsmen of Sungpan and Xining supplied both the nomads of Kokonor and Tshwa' i dam and the towns of 'Ba' thang and Li thang with hardware such as copper kettles in the 19th century (Rockhill 1891: 60, 1895: 708). In Gansu up until the Muslim uprising of 1929–30 Chinese metalworkers in Lintan (Taozhou) produced brass and copperware including cast vessels and

teapots which were then traded by Chinese Muslim merchants (*xie jia*) to Tibetan nomads on the A mdo grasslands (Teichmann 1922: 22, Stubel 1958: 25). At the end of the 19th century other peripatetic Chinese blacksmiths travelled between nomad encampments making saddles, knives, swords, kettles, matchlocks and teapots in Tibetan style. Rockhill describes them as having a virtual monopoly in that area then (Rockhill 1891: 81, 1894: 115).

This leads on to some final points. Within the last two decades the place of Tibetan metalworkers in towns seems to have been taken by Chinese craftsmen producing equivalent goods at cheaper prices. Yet outside of such centres Tibetan metalworkers continue to operate within farming villages as before and in some cases maintain skills almost as high as those they were famous for in the early 20th century. It appears that remote villages continue to harbour such skills because they do not have to rely solely on metalworking for a main income and therefore to compete with cheaper Chinese products. The craftsmen in such villages can therefore continue to tap into the quality end of the market. Some former centres including Hor po and Apishang and surrounding smaller villages continue to produce large quantities of metalwork. Although this is of variable quality, a percentage remains of excellent standard. The considerable scale of production at Apishang is revealed by the fact that, out of a population of close to 400, about 90 work metal, either on a part time or full time basis. Village craftsmen, however, also pointed out that out of this total only about forty men could be described as highly skilled.

In the Hor po valley area a traditional system continues where metalworkers are organised into eight family groups, each specializing in the production of a different type of object, one for example being knives. Numbers of craftsmen in each group vary greatly, the largest today being 500.[8] Here, where once ironworking made up probably 80% of work carried out, today it forms only perhaps 10% of the total output with copper and silverwork now predominating. At Hor po iron is now mainly used in the production of knives of about fifteen centimetres long for women and large ones approaching the length of daggers at up to thirty centimetres for men. The latter have embossed or openwork brass pommels and are contained in silver sheaths. At Apishang and at Hor po a little damascened ironwork is still made,

[8] Personal communication from Mr Brian McElney.

though most of the decoration is executed in silver, gold being rarely used. Simple geometric or linear silver decoration is found today on objects such as harness mounts and on knives and swords. Evidently there is no longer a market for elaborately damascened or pierced iron-work.

But the continuity of a high level of skill, at least within a minority of craftsmen in the Sde dge area, can be shown by colour plate 103, showing a purse, and by plate 104, illustrating a tinder pouch made within the last 20 years by the 47-year-old master craftsman (2003) Onchen, from Apishang. Lastly plate 105 represents a *ga'u* made around 1940 by Onchen's father Rgyud smad, which in quality could match much of the work currently given 19th or even 18th century dates. The latter point underlines the hazardous nature of any attempted art historical dating of this type of object, since any of the last mentioned pieces could easily be mistaken for 19th-century or earlier material.

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

92. *Shing lo pa tra*, scrollwork detail from a *ga'u*, Eastern Tibet, 20th century, silver (Private collection).
93. *Sa lo ma pa tra*, detail from a *ga'u* made in Lhasa, silver (Private collection).
94. Scrollwork from side of a beer jug, Central or Southern Tibet, late 19th century, copper and silver (Private collection).
95. The "Eight Auspicious Emblems", *ga'u*, Eastern Tibet, 20th century, silver and silver gilt, 20 cm. high, 15 cm. wide (Private collection).
96. *Tsi pa ta* or "Face of Glory" on a large *ga'u*, Eastern Tibet, c.19th century, silver and silver gilt (Ethnology Museum of Zurich University, No. 14706).
97. *Tsi pa ta* or "Face of Glory", Central or Southern Tibet, from a brass and copper folding table c. late 19th century (Private collection).
98. Belt hanger made in Apishang, Eastern Tibet, c.1980, silver and turquoise, 33 cm. long.
99. Belt hanger made by a Chinese silversmith, Yushu market, Eastern Tibet, 2003, silver, 35 cm. long.
100. *Ga'u* made by a Chinese silversmith, Yushu market, Eastern Tibet, 2003, silver, 15 cm. high.
101. Detail of plate from a belt made by a Chinese silversmith at Yushu, Eastern Tibet, 2003, silver, 22 cm. long.
102. "Gnya' lam" *ga'u*, Gangtok, Sikkim, 20th century, silver and silver gilt, 16 cm. high (Private collection).

*103. Purse made in Apishang, Eastern Tibet, c.1975, silver, silver gilt, steel and coral, 13 cm. wide.

*104. Tinder pouch made in Apishang, Eastern Tibet, c.1975, silver, silver gilt, steel and turquoise, 15 cm. wide.

105. *Ga'u* made in Apishang, Eastern Tibet, c.1960, silver and silver gilt, 19 cm. high, 15 cm. wide.

DE'U DMAR DGE BSHES'S METHOD OF COMPOUNDING COLOURS (LAC-DYE BROWN, VERMILION BROWN AND THE COLOURS DERIVED FROM THEM)

SHUNZO ONODA

The eighth chapter of De'u dmar dge bshes's *Kun gsal tshon gyi las rim* focuses on the theories of colour composition. The author De'u dmar dge bshes Bstan 'dzin phun tshogs was one of the most influential Tibetan art theorists in 18th century Tibet.

At the IATS conference at Leiden, I had the occasion to read a paper entitled "Some inconsistencies of colour composition technique in Tibet" (Onoda 2002) in which I considered some inconsistencies of several art theorists in Tibet: Bo dong Pan chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1375–1451), Mi pham rgya mtsho (1846–1912), Rong tha Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1863–1917) and De'u dmar dge bshes. But at that time I could not use the Tibetan manuscript of De'u dmar dge bshes's Kun gsal tshon gyi las rim.

In 2001, at the Beijing Seminar on Tibetan Studies, I read a paper entitled "Chemical reactions of colour compositions". At the conference of Beijing, after I had read my paper, Prof. Luo Bingfeng 羅秉芬 (the translator of the Chinese version of the *Kun gsal tshon gyi las rim*) kindly gave me the original Tibetan manuscript which she had used for her translation work. A few weeks later, Dr Gene Smith, who was also attending the Beijing conference, kindly sent me a xerox copy of De'u dmar dge bshes's other work on medicine titled *Gso rig gces btus rin chen phreng ba* which actually includes passages parallel to the whole of the eighth chapter of the *Kun gsal tshon gyi las rim*. I acknowledge their generous help and guidance.

In the present paper, I would like to deal with various kinds of brown colours and colours derived from them. We can find many kinds of brown colour in Tibetan *thang ka* painting. Among those, there are two fundamental brown colours which become the components of various derivations: (type a) "Lac-dye brown" which is produced by mixing

skag (lac-dye) and *dkar* (=*ka rag*: white chalk); and (type b) "vermilion brown" which is produced by mixing *mtshal* (vermilion) and *dkar*.

TYPE A) LAC-DYE BROWN

First of all let us consider De'u dmar dge bshes's explanation of na ros colours. In the IATS conference in Leiden I also quoted De'u dmar dge bshes's account of *na ros*, but I did that only from the Chinese translation:

> 白色和朱砂色相混則成那若，由於其中的胭脂紅的比例不同分大，中，小三色，故成為紅棕色，棕色，淺棕色 [Luo: 53–54]

The very first part of the quotation may be translated like this:

> Mixing white colour and vermilion colour makes na ros. …. The term 朱砂色 in the Chinese translation may cause misunderstanding. The word should be translated as 胭脂色(lac-dye colour).

The original Tibetan text is as follows:

> *dkar dang rgya tshos bsres pa la/*
> *na ros zhes bya de la yang/*
> *skag shad che 'bring chung ba'i mthus/*
> *na dmar na ros na dkar 'byung/* De'u dmar [MS:24; SRCT:114]
> When white chalk is mixed with lac-dye, then *na ros* is produced. Depending on the proportion of lac-dye added, by addition of large, medium and small amounts respectively, *na dmar* (reddish brown), *na ros* (brown) and *na dkar* (whitish brown) are produced.

De'u dmar dge bshes's method here is clear. Bo dong pan chen also gives the following account about the difference between this lac-dye brown and vermilion brown:

> */khyad par na ros dmar skya ni/*
> */dkar po dangs pa'i rigs rnam la/*
> */rgya skyegs snan pa na ros yin/ ..../*
> */dmar skya mtshal dkar legs par snang/* [Bo dong: 257-75]
> [The] difference between *na ros* and *dmar skya*: if lac-dye is added to pure white, then *na ros* (lac-dye brown) is obtained. By mixing vermilion and white well, then *dmar skya*(vermilion pink, lit. light red) is produced.

According to him, *na ros* belongs to lac-dye derivations, and *dmar skya* belongs to vermilion derivations.

Let us examine Rong tha's theory next. According to Rong tha's method, too *na ros* is obtained by mixing *dkar* and *skag*, but he explains that *dmar skya* is also created in the same way. Rong tha writes:

> */dkar la skag bsres na ros te/*
> */dmar skya legs par 'byung ba yin/* [Rong tha: 183]
> If lac-dye is added to white, then *na ros* or *dmar skya* is produced well.

And he adds:

> *dkar la li chu bsres ser skya/*
> *mtshal chu bsres pas mtshal skya yin/* [Rong tha: 183]
> If diluted minium is mixed with white chalk, *ser skya* (light yellow) is produced.By mixing diluted vermilion with it, *mtshal skya* (light vermilion colour) is produced.

The *dmar skya* of Rong tha seems to be different from his *mtshal skya*. So Bo dong's account quoted above implies that there had existed disagreement on this point since Bo dong's time.

Various compounded colours are derived from this fundamental na ros colour. De'u dmar dge bshes explains *mon kha* (mauve) and *mchin kha* (liver colour) as following:

> *na ros dag la rams (*MS:*ram) bsres pas/*
> *mon kha zhes bya rams (*MS:*ram) shed kyis/*
> *mon dkar mon dngos (*SRCT.*sngon) mon nag gsum/*
> De'u dmar [MS:25; SRCT:114]
> When *rams* (indigo) is added to pure *na ros*, the colour called *mon kha* is obtained. Depending on the proportion of indigo added, three kinds, *mon dkar* (whitish mauve), *mon dngos* (standard mauve) and *mon nag* (dark mauve), can be obtained.

And he continues:

> *zhib par na ros rigs gsum po/*
> *re rer rams (*MS:*ram) shes che 'bring chung/*
> *byas pas mon kha (*MS*:kha'i) rigs dgu 'byung/*
> De'u dmar [MS: 25; SRCT: 114]
> More precisely, to each three kinds of *na ros*, by addition of large, medium and small amounts of indigo respectively, nine kinds of *mon kha* are produced.

As for this subdivision of *mon kha*, the Chinese translation counts nine colours aside from three kinds of basic *mon kha*:

> 因藍靛比例不同而成粟米色(28)，土雞冠花色(29)，青箱子色(30)；再細棕色可分三種，各自加藍靛比例不同又大，中，小三種，故可分為九種蓼子草色(31-39) [Luo: 54]

I do not understand how the translator reached this counting. I think it should be: "nine colours of *mon kha* contain three kinds which are described right before it".

Here again, let us refer back to Rong tha's system. Rong tha explains about *mon kha* and *mchin kha* as following:

> */na ros rams bsres mon kha dang/*
> */de la cher bsres mon sngon zer/*
> If indigo is added to *na ros*, *mon kha* (mauve) is produced. If indigo predominates in the above mixture, *mon sngon* (blue mauve) is obtained.

Rong tha's *mon sngon* (blue mauve) seems to be almost the same as De'u dmar dge bshes's *mon nag* (dark mauve).

> */mon kha ser skya bsres mchin kha/*
> */dkar shas che ba mchin skya'o/*
> */mchin kha skag bsres mchin smug zer/* [Rong tha: 183]
> If ser skya (light yellow: diluted minium plus white calk) is mixed with *mon kha*, then *mchin kha* (liver colour) isproduced. If white chalk predominates in the above mixture, *mchin skya* (light liver colour) is obtained. If *skag* (lac-dye) is mixed with *mchin kha*, it is called *mchin smug* (maroonish liver colour).

His way of producing *mchin skya* is not clear for me.

Let us see De'u dmar dge bshes's explanation about *mon ser* and *mchin kha* next. Both of them are made from *mon kha*:

> *mon khar ser bsres mon ser zer/*
> *mon khar ser skya bsres pa la/*
> *mchin kha zhes 'byung mon dkar la/*
> *sbyar bas mchin skya mon nag la/*
> *sbyar ba de la mchin nag 'byung/* De'u dmar [MS:25; SRCT:114]
> If yellow colour is added to *mon kha*, it is called *mon ser*.
> If ser skya (light yellow) is added to *mon kha*, then *mchin kha* (liver colour) is produced. By adding *ser skya* to *mon dkar*, *mchin skya* (light liver colour) is produced. And adding it to *mon nag*, *mchin nag* (dark liver colour) is produced.

His way of producing *mchin skya*, [standard] *mchin kha* and *mchin nag* can be understood clearly. According to Rong tha, the way to get *mchin skya* consists simply in adding white chalk to a type of *mon kha*. But De'u dmar dge bshes's way is not as simple as Rong tha's. Although it is finally determined by the quantity of white chalk, *mchin skya* cannot be obtained simply by adding white chalk as Rong tha says. As for the subdivision of *mchin kha*, De'u dmar dge bshes writes:

> *mchin khar skag bsnan mchin smug 'byung/*
> *mchin khar bab la cung zad bsre/*
> *mchin ser mchin pa nad btab mdog/*
> *na ros nang du snag tsha'i g.ya'/*
> *bsres pas (*MS:*la) mchin nag rigs gcig 'byung/* De'u dmar [MS:25; SRCT:114]
>
> If lac-dye is added to *mchin kha*, then *mchin smug* (maroonish liver colour) is produced. If a small amount of orpiment is added to *mchin kha*, then *mchin ser* (yellowish liver colour) is produced. That is just like the colour of complexion of a jaundice patient. If a fragment of carbon black is added to *na ros*, then another kind of *mchin nag* is produced.

Though it is a form of a hearsay, De'u dmar dge bshes reports that there are other derivative colours from lac-dye brown:

> *Rgya mthing na ros dang sbyar na/*
> *mchang (*MS:*'chang) kha zhes zer de bzhin du/*
> *bar mthing na ros sbyor (*SRCT.*sbyar) ba la/*
> *mchang (MS:'chang) chen zhes su bshad pa thos/* De'u dmar [MS: 30; SRCT: 114]
>
> If one mixes *rgya mthing* (Indian azurite?) and na ros, then a colour called *mchang kha* is produced. Similarly, if one mixes *bar mthing* (lit. medium azurite) and *na ros*, then a colour called *mchang chen* is produced. I heard that from others.

It is strange that the Chinese translation gives this colour's name as "dead body colour (死屍色)". It seems that the word *'chang kha* (or *'chad kha* a variant for *mchang kha* in the MS) produced this translation. I do not understand what *bar mthing* means. I think it means azurite grained as middle size.

TYPE B) VERMILION BROWN

When we mix vermilion with white, not only *dmar skya* but also the colour called "human flesh colour (*mi sha*)" can be obtained. This is used for painting a person's flesh. De'u dmar dge bshes's explanation of the *mi sha* colours is as follows:

> *dkar po bzhi gsum dag la ni/*
> *mtshal gyi kha bun bzhi cha gcig/*
> *bsres la mi sha kha sha dkar/*
> *mtshal (*MS*:tshal) kha cung bskyed sha dmar 'ong/* De'u dmar [MS: 25–26; SRCT: 114]
>
> If one mixed 3/4 of white chalk and 1/4 of vermilion, then *mi sha kha*

> (human flesh colour) or *sha dkar* (light flesh colour) is obtained.When the vermilion is increased a little, *sha dmar* (reddish flesh colour) is obtained.

Rong tha's method is as follows:

> */dkar la mtshal skya bsres sha dkar/*
> */de las che bsres sha dmar zer/*
> */de la ram bsres rgan sha'i mdog/*
> */sha dmar ba bla bsnan sha ser/* [Rong tha: 183]
> When *mtshal skya* (light vermilion colour) is added to white chalk, *sha dkar* (light flesh colour) is produced. Mixing a larger proportion of it, then *sha dmar* (reddish flesh colour) is produced. If indigo is added to, *rgan sha'i mdog* (the colour of an old person's flesh) is produced. Reddish flesh colour plus orpiment makes *sha ser* (yellowish flesh colour).

Rong tha clearly says that *sha ser* (yellowish flesh colour) can be obtained by mixing *sha dmar* (reddish flesh colour) with *ba bla* (orpiment). On this point, De'u dmar dge bshes's method is different from Rong tha's. De'u dmar dge bshes explains his as follows:

> *mi sha kha [*MS:*la] bab la chung/*
> *bsres pas sha ser 'byung ba'am/*
> *li khri 'am (*MS:*lam) ni ldong ros rnams/(*MS:*dang/)*
> *bsnan pas sha ser rigs gnyis 'byung/* De'u dmar [MS: 26; SRCT: 114]
> If orpiment is added to human flesh colour, then a yellowish flesh colour is obtained. If minium or realgar is added to human flesh colour, then another two kinds of yellowish flesh colour are produced.

It is not clear if Rong tha's above mentioned *rgan sha'i mdog* (the colour of an old person's flesh) is produced by mixing *sha dkar* and *rams* or by mixing *sha dmar* and *rams*. De'u dmar dge bshes explains that we can get the colour called *rgas sha* (old flesh) by mixing *sha dkar* and *rams*. He says:

> *mi sha kha la tshon rams (*MS: *ram) bsres/ (*SRCT: *bsre/)*
> *rgas sha drang srong bram ze'i mdog/*
> *zhes (*SRCT: *ces) bya'i sha sngon 'byung bar snang/* De'u dmar [MS: 26; SRCT: 114]
> If indigo is added to human flesh colour, a pale flesh colour which is called "old person's flesh colour", i.e. "brahmin's colour" is created.

He also states that the colour called *sha smug* (maroonish flesh colour) is produced from *sha dkar* (light flesh colour).

> *mi sha kha la smug po bsnan (*SRCT: *bsre)/*
> *de la sha smug 'byung ba yin/ (*MS: *ni/)*
> *mi sha kha la mon kha bsre/*
> *de (*MS: *der) yang sha smug rigs gcig 'byung/* De'u dmar [MS: 26; SRCT: 114]
> If *smug po* (maroon colour) is added to human flesh colour, then *sha smug* (maroonish flesh colour) is obtained. If *mon kha* (mauve) is added to human flesh colour, then another kind of maroonish flesh colour is produced.

As mentioned above, by mixing various colour materials with *sha dkar*, one can produce *sha ser*, *sha sngon*, *sha dkar* and others. On the other hand, by mixing *sngo skya* (light blue: azurite plus white chalk) with *sha dmar*, *sha dkar*, *sha ser* etc., a series of animal flesh colours are created:

> *sha dmar nang du sngo skya chung/*
> *bsres la (*SRCT: *pas) ri dwags mdog zhes (*SRCT: *ces) smra/*
> *ri kha de yang sha dkar dang/*
> *sha dmar sha ser sha smug dang/*
> *sha sngon (*SRCT: *kha) sbyar gzhi' (*MS: *bzhi'i) khyad par las/*
> *ri dkar ri dmar ri ser dang/*
> *ri smug ri sngon lnga ru 'byung/* De'u dmar [MS: 28; SRCT: 115]
> It is said that if a little *sngo skya* (light blue) is added to *sha dmar*, then *ri dwags mdog* (the colour of animal flesh) can be obtained.
> Among this series of *ri kha* (the colours of animal flesh), depending on the difference of basic colours on which *sngo skya* added to *sha dkar*, to *sha dmar*, to *sha ser*, to *sha smug* and to *sha sngon*, five different colours —*ri dkar* (whitish animal flesh), *ri dmar* (reddish animal flesh), *ri ser* (yellowish animal flesh), *ri smug* (maroonish animal flesh) and *ri sngon* (blueish animal flesh colour)—are produced.

Aside from *mi sha* and *mtshal skya*, there exists one more colour which is produced by mixing white chalk with vermilion. This colour is called *glo kha* (lit. lung colour). About this colour we find the following account in the De'u dmar dge bshes's *Kun gsal tshon gyi las rim*:

> *mtshal skya nang du dkar chung (*MS: *cung) bsres (*SRCT: *bsre)*
> *dmar skya glo ba'i kha dog 'byung/ De'u dmar* [MS: 26; SRCT: 115]
> If white chalk is added in small amount to *mtshal skya* (light vermilion colour), then *dmar skya* (vermilion pink) of the colour of lung is produced.

He further deals with the subdivisions of *glo kha*:

> *glo khar ser bsres glo ser te/*
> *glo ba nad kyis btab pa'i mdog/*

> *glo kha (*SRCT: *ba) dkar shas che ba la/*
> *dmar skya lcags bsreg mdog ces zer/*
> *glo khar skag bsnan glo smug dang/*
> *rams (*MS: *ram) bsnan glo sngon rnag g.yos mdog/* De'u dmar [MS: 26–27; SRCT: 115]
> When yellow colour is added to *glo kha*, *glo ser* (yellowish lung colour) or the lung colour of a patient with consumption is produced. It is said that if a little *sngo skya* (light blue) is added to *sha dmar*, then *ri dwags mdog* (the colour of animal flesh) can be obtained. Among this series of *ri kha* (the colours of animal flesh), depending on the difference of basic colours on which *sngo skya* is added to *sha dkar*, *sha dmar*, *sha ser*, *sha smug* and *sha sngon*, five different colours—*ri dkar* (whitish animal flesh), *ri dmar* (reddish animal flesh), *ri ser* (yellowish animal flesh), *ri smug* (maroonish animal flesh) and *ri sngon* (blueish animal flesh colour)—are produced.

This way of producing *glo kha* by De'u dmar dge bshes is different from Mi pham's. Mi pham writes:

> *glo kha zi hung skag gi bu* [Mi pham: 88]

According to Mi pham's system, lung colour is a son of *skag*. This means Mi pham considered *glo kha* to be a derivative of lac-dye brown.

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(MS)=De'u dmar dge bshes bstan 'dzin Phun tshogs. *Kun gsal tshon gyi las rim me tog mdzangs ster 'ja' 'od 'bum byin.*

(SRCT) = De'u dmar dge bshes bstan 'dzin Phun tshogs. *gSo rig gces btus rin chen phreng ba.*

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

*106. De'u dmar dge bshes's *na ros, mon kha* and *mchin kha*.
*107. De'u dmar dge bshes's *mi sha* and *glo kha.*

ON THE TRADITION OF THE *VAIROCANĀBHISAMBODHI-SŪTRA* AND THE GARBHAMAṆḌALA IN TIBET

KIMIAKI TANAKA

INTRODUCTION

The Ryōkai or Two-Realm Maṇḍalas that were transmitted to Japan from Tang China at the beginning of the 9th century not only constituted the basis of tantric Buddhist iconography in Japan, but they also affected the entire culture of Japan as well. Of these two mandalas, icons related to the Vajradhātu (Kongōkai) Maṇḍala, particularly five thangka sets of the Five Buddhas, are comparatively abundant in Tibet, as shown by Dr Christian Luczanits.[1] However, as for the Garbha (Taizō) Maṇḍala, there are very few icons left today in Tibet.

In the tantric Buddhism of Tibet, the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* is regarded as the basic tantra of the *Caryā Tantra* in the standard fourfold classification of Buddhist tantras. But because the Indo-Tibetan current of tantric Buddhism based on the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* fell into decline quite early, not very much material has been preserved. However, at Ratnagiri and Udayagiri in Orissa, statues of Vairocanābhisambodhi, the main deity of the Garbhamaṇḍala, have been excavated. In addition a statue from Ratnagiri, now kept in the Archaeological Museum, is accompanied by the Eight Great Bodhisattvas (*nye ba'i sras chen* in Tibetan). We can also see the combination of the main deity (there are several opinions regarding its identification) and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas in the late Buddhist caves at Ellora too.

This current of tantric Buddhism was, however, introduced to Tibet during the ancient empire of Tibet, called Tufan 吐蕃 by the Chinese historians. Moreover, exemplars of the Garbhamaṇḍala, although few in number, were previously known to exist. Unfortunately none of them was produced at the time of the ancient empire. But recently several

[1] Dr Christian Luczanits's presentation on the five-thangka sets of the Five Buddhas was given at the same session of the 10th Seminar of the IATS and his article is also included in this volume.

icons related to the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, made during the 8th and 9th centuries, have been identified in the territory of the ancient empire of Tibet.

EXAMPLES OF VAIROCANĀBHISAMBODHI IN THE SILK ROAD REGION

Stein painting No. 50 from Dunhuang in the British Museum was thought to be of Amitābha. But I think this too represents Vairocanābhisambodhi accompanied by the Eight Great Bodhisattvas,[2] some of whom have Tibetan captions. Therefore, this painting may be assumed to date from during or slightly after the annexation of Dunhuang to the Tibetan empire.

The same combination occurs in a wall painting in Anxi Yulin cave No. 25. Unfortunately, the wall is damaged and four bodhisattvas painted on the facing right side have disappeared. But we can see here the combination of Vairocanābhisambodhi and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas.

In the Silk Road region, a wooden portable shrine, now kept at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in the United States, has also been discovered. In this shrine two other *bodhisattva*s are attached to the combination of Vairocanābhisambodhi and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas. There is an inscription with the term *byang chub* on the back. This shrine was also produced in the Silk Road region during its Tibetan occupation.

In Dunhuang, the *Rnam par snang mdzad 'khor dang bcas pa la bstod pa*,[3] a Tibetan text which mentions Vairocana and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, was also discovered.

VAIROCANĀBHISAMBODHI IN CENTRAL TIBET

Next, I will consider Central Tibet, the heart of the ancient empire. At Bsam yas, combinations of a main deity and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas occur in all three storeys in the main building (Dbu rtse).[4]

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[2] See Tanaka 2000: 20–38.

[3] Pelliot tibétain No. 108; Stein Tibetan No. 366, III; Stein Tibetan No. 385, II.

[4] I have referred mainly to the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* and *Pad ma bka' thang*.

But the combination of Vairocana and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas occurs only on the second floor.

The main statue on the second floor, restored after the Cultural Revolution, has one face and two arms, and is adorned with ornaments. The Buddha seems to display the *dhyānamudrā* with both hands, though they are not visible, being covered by cloth. This iconography corresponds to that of Vairocanābhisambodhi. On this floor two bodhisattvas, namely, Dri med grags pa (Vimalakīrti) and Dga' ba'i dpal (the original name in Sanskrit is unknown), have been added to the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, making a total of ten. It is worthy of note that the combination of a main deity, the Eight Great Bodhisattvas and Vimalakīrti together with another bodhisattva also occurs on the first floor of the same monastery and in the above-mentioned *Rnam par snang mdzad 'khor dang bcas pa la bstod pa*.

Moreover, two wrathful gatekeepers named Kin and Kang are also added to this combination. Kinkang is the phonetic transcription of Jingang, the Chinese translation of vajra, pronounced kinkang in ancient Chinese. Therefore, they represent a pair of Chinese-style gatekeepers holding a vajra (Jingang lishi 金剛力士), though their present rendering is far removed from their models in Tang China.

According to Hugh Richardson (1990: 271–74), old statues of Vairocana produced during the ancient empire were kept in Gnas gsar, the renowned *gter gnas* in Nyang stod. Unfortunately, two statues of Vairocana enshrined in two chapels named 'Og min Rnam par snang mdzad and Sang rgyas rigs lnga were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

When I visited Gnas gsar in 2001, I met one Phun tshogs, who used to be a temple-priest at Gnas gsar but returned to secular life during the Cultural Revolution, and is now a keeper of the only extant chapel at Gnas gsar, that of Prajñāparamitā, called Yum chen mo lha khang. He remembers quite well the situation before the destruction and he kindly showed me the tree planted after the destruction on the spot where 'Og min Rnam par snang mdzad had stood.

He also described from memory the iconography of the deities. The main deity of 'Og min Rnam par snang mdzad was one-faced and two-armed, and displayed the *dhyānamudrā* with both hands. This Vairocana was attended by the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, four on each side, and two wrathful deities Acala (Mi g.yo ba) and Trailokyavijaya

(Khams gsum rnam rgyal) were set on both sides of the entrance of the chapel.[5]

The combination of a main deity, the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, Acala and Trailokyavijaya also occurs on the first floor of Bsam yas and in the above-mentioned *Rnam par snang mdzad 'khor dang bcas pa la bstod pa*. I was thus able to confirm the existence of the said combination in Central Tibet, too.

EXTANT EXAMPLES IN EASTERN TIBET

In Eastern Tibet, on the other hand, a relief of Vairocana and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas was discovered in Byams mdun, near Chamdo. Dr Amy Heller (1992 and 1994) has already written about these reliefs and so there is no need to go into further detail here.

Another example of this combination during the ancient empire is the relief in the Rnam par snang mdzad lha khang at 'Bis mdo, Jekhungdo county, Qinghai province. This relief is very important for the reconstruction of the lost original statues at Bsam yas. It has been also been mentioned by several scholars, but for a long time we did not have any clear photographs of it. Fortunately in 2000 I was supplied with detailed photographs of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas by a Japanese television production company that visited the site.

A peculiar feature of these Eight Great Bodhisattvas is represented by their unique costumes. According to the Sba bzhad, when Bsam yas monastery was constructed, King Khri srong lde btsan selected handsome Tibetan boys and pretty Tibetan girls as models for the statues and thus inauguraged the Tibetan style of Buddhist art (Wangdu and Diemberger 2000: 64–65), an account which might reflect a national ideal in the ancient empire of Tibet or of the time the *Sba bzhad* was compiled.

SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF THE GARBHAMAṆḌALA IN LATER TIBETAN ART

Next, I wish to mention several already known examples of the Tibetan Garbhamaṇḍala. The Garbhamaṇḍala in the Ngor Collection was

[5] At first, Mr Phun tshogs said that there were two images of Mi g.yo ba on either side of the entrance. Afterwards, he recollected the name of Khams gsum rnam rgyal.

brought out of Tibet by the late Bsod nams rgya mtsho, a former abbot of Thar rtse college at Ngor monastery. There is another version of the Garbhamṇḍala preserved at the Tateyama Museum in Toyama prefecture, Japan.[6]

A thangka put on the market by a London art dealer in 1993 is, as far as I know, the earliest extant Tibetan example of the Garbhamaṇḍala, although the central deity faces east and the arrangement of the deities is the reverse of the norm. In addition, the four Buddhas of the Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra, namely Ratnaketu (East), Saṃkusumitarājendra (South), Amitābha (West) and Dundubhisvara (North) are depicted in the archways above the four gates.[7]

These examples differ somewhat from each other in their iconography and the arrangement of the deities. This is unusual for Tibetan maṇḍalas, the details of whose iconography are generally fixed, and reflects the coexistence of various iconographic traditions.

TRADITIONS SURVIVING IN AMDO

Today, the tradition of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* and of its maṇḍala has more or less disappeared in Central Tibet, but it has managed to survive in Amdo. The Kālacakra College (Dus 'khor grva tshang) in Bla brang Monastery, Gansu province, runs a course on the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, and during my visit in 1996 I was able to take photographs of its Garbhamaṇḍala. In addition, I acquired copies of the numerous wood-block ritual manuals preserved at Bla brang Monastery. These contain texts whose existence was already known and which had even been reproduced as ritual manuals on the Garbhamaṇḍala by the 1st and 3rd Panchen Lamas. But they also contain texts, such as Btsun gzugs shes rab rgya mtsho's 62-folio manual, which were hitherto unknown. The author's birth and death dates are unclear, but I have heard that he was a learned priest who pursued his studies at the Dus 'khor grva tshang in the Bla brang Monastery.

At Rva rgya Monastery in Mgo log county, Qinghai province, I was also able to obtain photographs of a line drawing of a *samaya-maṇḍala*

6 I have already analyzed the basic structure of Tibetan version of the Garbhamaṇḍala in 1996: 46–53.

7 The set of these four Buddhas is not usually depicted in Tibet.

of the Garbhamaṇḍala used when creating a maṇḍala in coloured powders and also of xylographs and manuscripts of ritual manuals preserved at this monastery.

On that occasion, I met Rev. Jigs med rgyal mtshan of Rva rgya Monastery. He studied Buddhism at the Higher College of Tibetan Buddhism in Beijing and has now returned to his native land to become the chief priest of this monastery. He has, moreover, written a ritual manual on the Garbhamaṇḍala.

WALL PAINTINGS DEPICTING DEITIES OF THE GARBHAMAṆḌALA

The Samantabhadra Chapel (Kun bzang lha khang=2Eb') and Amoghapāśa Chapel (Don zhags lha khang=2Wa') in the Great Stupa of Rgyal rtse,[8] furthermore, preserve murals depicting various deities from the Garbhamaṇḍala. These two chapels are located on the second floor of the stupa.

In the Kun bzang lha khang, Mañjuśrī is painted in the centre of the west wall, and the 25 *bodhisattva*s depicted in the third square of the Garbhamaṇḍala are arranged around him. In the Don zhags lha khang, on the other hand, Vairocanābhisambodhi is depicted in the centre of the east wall. Śākyamuni, the main deity of the second square of the Garbhamaṇḍala, is painted in the centre of the west wall, whereas Mañjuśrī , the main deity of the third square, is depicted in the centre of the south wall. Other attendant deities of the Garbhamaṇḍala are arranged around them. This arrangement coincides with the triple-square system of the Garbhamaṇḍala and suggests that the iconography of this painting was supervised by a scholar versed in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*.

Portraits of lineage lamas can be seen along the top of the walls in the Don zhags lha khang. This lineage begins with the Indian pandit Jetāri (*circa* 10th cent.) and is very similar to that given in Tsong kha pa's *Gsan yig* and other documentary sources.

Therefore, it is clear that the tradition of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, first introduced during the ancient empire had been lost by the beginning of the 15th century when the great stupa of Rgyal rtse was

[8] I have adopted the numbering of the chapels of Sku 'bum from Ricca and Lo Bue 1993.

constructed. And the tradition surviving in Tibet was reintroduced from India following the revival of Buddhism.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have attempted to shed light on the history of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* and Garbhamaṇḍala in Tibet making comparisons among the different iconographic versions found in Tibet, outlining their characteristics as found in statues, paintings and documents. For further details, reference should be made to the accompanying chart and diagram (Figs 15 and 16).

The *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra*, which once flourished on the soil of India, had been neglected by Indian and western scholars until a couple of decades ago since it fell into decline after the 9th century. But, as I have made clear in the above, the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* played a rather important role in the formation of Buddhist iconography in Tibet at an early stage.

It is worth noting that the combination of Vairocanābhisambodhi, the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, and Acala and Trailokyavijaya represents the essence of the principal deities of Garbhamaṇḍala, though it is not clear whether the ancient Tibetans were aware of this (since the present Tibetan version of Garbhamaṇḍala omits Maitreya and Samantabhadra out of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas [cf. accompanying chart, Fig. 16]).

I believe that the study of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra* and Garbhamaṇḍala in Tibet is of considerable importance not only for a deeper understanding of Tibetan Buddhism, but also for further insights into the historical development of esoteric Buddhism in general.

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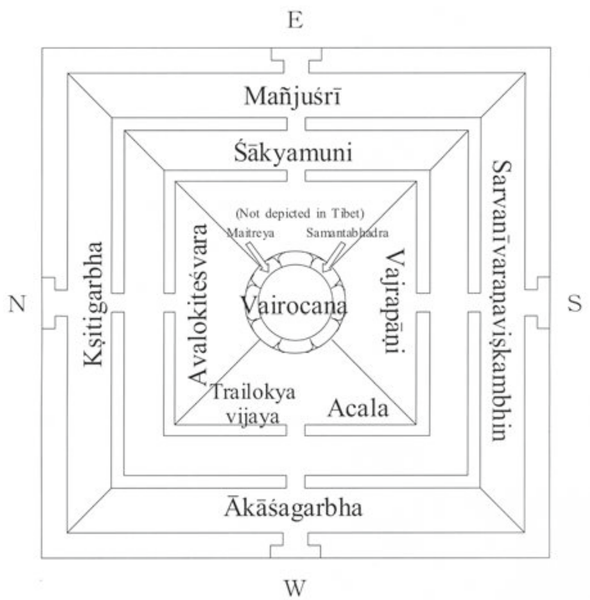


Fig. 16: Basic structure of the Tibetan Garbhamaṇḍala

1.Main deity + Eight Great Bodhisattvas		
① Dhyānamudrā		
	A.Vairocanā-bhisambodhi	Vairocanābhisambodhi (Ratnagiri) · Stein Painting No.50 (Dunhuang) 'Bis mdo Vairocana · Byams mdun Vairocana
	B.Amitābha	Amitābha maṇḍala (Kaiho ji 開法寺)
② Dharmacakramudrā		1st floor, Cave 12, Ellora · Buddha in Dharmacakramudrā (Udayagiri)
③ Bhūmisparśamudrā		Buddha in Bhūmisparśamudrā (Temple 1, Ratnagiri)
2.Main deity + Eight great bodhisattvas + 2 bodhisattvas		
① Dhyānamudrā		Portable Shrine of Vairocana and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas (Nelson-Atkins Museum) Eight Great Bodhisattva maṇḍala (Cave 12, Ellora)
② Dharmacakramudrā?		『文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經』 (Including Vimalakīrti)
③ Bhūmisparśamudrā		Seok kul am, Kyung ju, Korea (Including Vimalakīrti) 2nd and 3rd floors, Cave 12, Ellora
3.Main deity + Eight Great Bodhisattvas + Acala and Trailokyavijaya		
① Dhyānamudrā		Sonsho maṇḍala (Amoghavajra tradition) 'Og min Rnam par snang mdzad (Gnas gsar)
4.Main deity + Eight Great Bodhisattvas + 2 bodhisattvas + Acala and Trailokyavijaya		
① Dhyānamudrā?		*Rnam par snang mdzad 'khor dang bcas pa la bstod pa* (Dunhuang)
② Bhūmisparśamudrā		Bsam yas *dbus rtse* 1st floor
5.Main deity + Eight Great Bodhisattvas + 2 bodhisattvas + Jin gang (金剛)		
Dhyānamudrā?		Bsam yas *dbus rtse* 2nd floor

Fig. 15: Combination of Vairocanābhisambodhi and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas

THE BUDDHIST DISCOURSE ON GENDER IN TIBETAN MEDICAL ICONOGRAPHY

Serinity Young

Tibetan medicine is based on a theory of correspondences or sympathies between the human body, the natural world, and various otherworldly realms. It both asserts this theoretical approach to the patient and utilizes practical experience, such as visual observation of the patient, hands-on examinations of pulses and urine, along with questioning the patient.[1] At the same time, the Tibetan experience of self includes (1) the notion of past lives and the belief in future lives, (2) relationships with spiritual and natural beings of many different sorts, and (3) social arrangements that include family and clan members as an essential part of oneself.[2] This expanded conception of self defines the field of possible influences on health: one's karma from past lives affects one's constitution, general health and lifespan; demons and deities can influence health for good or ill; in the event that patients cannot reach a doctor their ailments can be diagnosed by examining the pulse of a close relative. The modern Western isolation of a diseased organ from the rest of the body,[3] to say nothing of its isolation from the mind and emotions of the patient, as well as from the influences of spirits and of the cosmos, is inconceivable to a traditional Tibetan doctor. Part of the beauty and fascination of Tibetan medical paintings is their unhurried revelation of these intricate connections.

The connections between Buddhism and medicine go back to early, frequent epithets of the Buddha as the Great Physician and references to Buddhist teachings as the best medicine,[4] as well as to the practice

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[1] AMNH 70.3/5466, scenes on tree trunk. To view any of the paintings go to http://anthro.amnh.org/tangkas. Medical knowledge gained from autopsies could also have come through the Tibetan practice of 'sky burial', in which the corpse is cut up and fed to carrion birds.

[2] For a brief discussion of the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist concept of the self see Young 1999: 51–53.

[3] On this point see Foucault 1973: *passim*.

[4] Birnbaum 1979: 3–19. This study of the celestial Medicine Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru

of medicine in Buddhist monasteries (Zysk 1991: 43–48). The Buddhist *Vinaya* reveals a deep interest in medicine, and by the mid 3rd century BC medicine was part of the course of study in Buddhist monasteries that extended medical care to the population at large (Zysk 1991: 43–48). Over time, medical skill became an important part of Buddhist missionary activity in India and elsewhere.[5] Epithets connecting the Buddha with medicine and medical activities proliferated in Mahāyāna Buddhism, where healing was valorized in pivotal works such as the *Lotus Sūtra*,[6] through the popularity of the Medicine Buddha, and in representations of primordial Buddhas as the first physicians and the first teachers of healing.

One of the most important Tibetan medical texts is the *Rgyud bzhi* (*Four Tantras*),[7] said to have been written in Sanskrit about 400 CE[8] and which now exists only in Tibetan and Mongolian translations. Actually it is a *gter ma* text, 'rediscovered' in the eleventh century, and attributed to the historical Buddha who is believed to have manifested as the Medicine Buddha in order to teach it. To a certain extent it is consistent with earlier Indian medical texts, but it also shows indigenous influences, as well as influences from Chinese, Central Asian, Persian and Greek practices. An important Tibetan commentary on the *Rgyud bzhi* is the *Vaiḍūrya sngon po* (*The Blue Beryl*)[9] of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705),[10] regent of the 5th Dalai Lama, which has been illustrated by a remarkable series of seventy-nine medical paintings.[11]

is essential reading for the understanding of healing in Mahāyāna Buddhism. His cult was widespread in Tibet; see Parfionovitch, Dorje and Meyer 1992: I.17–18 and II.173–74.

5 Zysk 1991: 51. An explicit example of this can be found in the preamble to the biography of the Tibetan doctor G.yu thog yon tan mgon po, trans. in Rechung 1973: 179–82.

6 Discussed in Birnbaum 1979, especially: 26–34.

7 *Rgyud bzhi* 1975: 10, f. 3, ll. 3–6, 9, f. 4, l.1. Rechung 1973: 48, has translated part of this text, though he drew on a slightly different manuscript.

8 Zysk 1991: 3. Fenner 1996: 458–69 , especially pp. 466–67, challenges this view.

9 Even though Monier-Williams glosses *vaiḍūrya* as 'a cat's-eye gem', and the translators of Sangs ryas rgya mtsho's commentary translated it as 'beryl', I am influenced in taking this as lapis lazuli by Birnbaum's discussion 1979: 80–81, and his translations of this term from Chinese texts, *passim*. I will, however, continue to use *The Blue Beryl* since that is the title of the only English translation in Parfionovitch 1992. That translation is somewhat out of sequence with the Leh edition that I used, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1973: I, f. 222, l. 5, and it incorporated material from the *Rgyud bzhi* 1975: I: 49.

10 For more information on this extremely important and enigmatic figure see Snellgrove and Richardson 1986: 204–208.

The paintings are designed as a visual aid to the text, and based on textual information we know that the original set began to be painted at the same time as Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho worked on *Vaiḍūrya sngon po* (1687) and they were completed at the latest by 1703. A set was hung in Chagpori College, the premiere medical school of Tibet in Lhasa, and additional sets were made for other medical colleges, including the one at the Tibetan temple in Peking, the Yonghe Gong,[12] and Tsugulsky Datsung monastery in Buryatia. Those presented here were copied from the Lhasa and Ulan Ude sets by Romio Shrestha (b. 1963) and his Tibetan, Nepalese and Bhutanese students in Kathmandu over a seven-year period in the late 1980s and early 1990s,[13] and donated by Emily Fisher to the American Museum of Natural History in 1998. The individual paintings vary in measurement between h: 79 cm x w: 60 cm and h: 70.3 cm x w: 58.2 cm and are first drawn on cloth in the traditional manner with charcoal, after which mineral and vegetable based paints are applied. In addition to illustrating the *Vaiḍūrya sngon po*, the paintings reveal a social and religious discourse on gender.

18th century women were not invited to attend the medical school at Chagpori, though modern examples of women trained in this elite system have occurred.[14] Based on modern examples of women folk healers, one can assume women's importance in healing was equally widespread in the past, especially as midwives are represented in the paintings (colour plate 108 and plate 109, bottom register)[15] and the *Vaiḍūrya sngon po* recommends having the umbilical cord cut by an experienced woman.[16] Further traces of women's participation can be seen in the depiction of a woman doctor, Btsan la lo ro,[17] in the abundant number of female deities (plate 110, top register)[18] involved in the production and cure of disease, as well as in mythical accounts of the

[11] A history of these paintings and their distribution is contained in Parfionovitch: I.5–8.

[12] F. Lessing had copies made of twelve of these paintings for the East Asiatic Library of the University of California at Berkeley Parfionovitch: I.5.

[13] Oral information from Laila Williamson, AMNH, March 2001.

[14] See, for example, Josayma and Dhondup 1990.

[15] AMNH 70.3/5468, bottom register.

[16] Parfionovitch 1992: 181, col. c. See also Chophel 1963: 4, who suggests that midwives are considered dangerous women associated with black witchcraft, probably due to the polluting power of the birth experience.

[17] 70.3/5478, top register, fifth figure from the right, Schopen 1997: 31 refers to an inscription by a nun-doctor at Bharhut dating back to the 1st century BC

[18] See also 70.3/5478, top register.

dissemination of knowledge related to healing that accord significant contributions to human women as well as female deities.[19] A textual example is the culture heroine Yid 'phrog ma who traveled the world studying with human and divine medical teachers and whose knowledge was passed on to the semi-legendary first doctor of Tibet, G.yu thog.[20] The presence of human and divine females in these mythical accounts suggests that some male practitioners actually did gain their medical knowledge from women. Charlotte Furth (Furth 1999: 68) notes a similar female source for Chinese medical practices, especially those specific to women, such as, gynecological practices. Despite these exceptions, the paintings reveal a scientific discourse on gender that codified the secondary status of women.

Medicine is believed to have had its origins in primordial time, in the realm of the Medicine Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru, and therefore is not the end product of human experience and of the ability to reason, but rather a special discovery: the more spiritually advanced the practitioner the closer he or she is to understanding the workings of the cosmos and its relation to human beings. In this sense, even today many Tibetan doctors are believed to be *sprul skus*, reincarnations of spiritually advanced beings. This means that to question the theory is to misunderstand reality; the theory is an eternal truth.

Given its centrality to the Buddhist understanding of reality, the medical explanations put forth by the *Rgyud bzhi* for the development of sexual characteristics, the physical signs of femaleness or maleness, offer profound insights into the Buddhist discourse on gender and sexuality. The *Rgyud bzhi* is an elite, scientific discourse that justified the secondary social and religious status of women at the same time it promulgated an ideology of male superiority. The *Rgyud bzhi* begins by saying that the sex of the fetus is determined at several moments before and after conception, beginning with the three things necessary for conception: semen (*khu*), which is considered male; blood (*khrag*), which is considered female; and the consciousness (*rnam shes*) of the being about to reincarnate,[21] which the *Vaiḍūrya sngon po* says has no "sense of belonging to a particular sex, regardless of its status [gender] in past

[19] See, for example, G.yu thog's biography in Rechung 1973: 141–327.

[20] Both their biographies are contained in Rechung *ibid*.

[21] Rechung 1973: 32. See also Paul 1985: 171–72, for more on the establishment of sex at conception. Two good articles that emphasize the karmic dimensions of this process are Weiss and Stablein 1980, respectively: 90–115 and 193–216.

lives" (Parfionovitch, 1992: I: 25, col. 1). Sex is first determined by karma which drives the incarnating consciousness toward a couple having sexual intercourse (plate 111). In anticipation of Freudian analysis the text says that if the consciousness feels attachment to the mother and aversion to the father, it will be male; if it feels attachment to the father and aversion to the mother, it will be female.

Additional factors determining sexual characteristics include that males are conceived on even days after the mother's menstrual cycle, females on odd days (colour plate 108, third row, first and second figure).[22] So, we see that sexual characteristics are believed to be formed quite early. A physiological basis for the determination of sexual characteristics is the belief that males are formed through a preponderance of semen and females through a preponderance of blood in the embryonic mixture,[23] and that equal quantities lead to the birth of a hermaphrodite. The embryonic mixture also refers to the different substances the mother and father contribute to the embryo's development: from the mother the embryo develops blood, muscles, and viscera; from the father, bone, brain, and spinal cord (plate 108, third row, fourth and fifth figure).[24] One aspect of the father's contribution, bone (*rus*), is considered more enduring over the generations than blood, an idea that is connected to privileging patrilineal descent over matrilineal descent and supporting patriarchal ideologies about family life.

Further insights into the Buddhist discourse on gender are contained in the medical discussion of the post-conception stages. Shortly before birth, mothers may dream of a male or a female figure depending on the sex of the child they are bearing (plate 109, top row, last two figures). Additionally, the male embryo curls up on the right side of the womb,

[22] Parfionovitch 1992: 1: 25, col. 2, and II: 181, col. 2. The same idea exists in medieval Chinese medical texts, Furth 1999, and in Indian medical texts *Suśruta Saṃhitā* 1998, II: 14, and *Caraka Saṃhitā* 1977 II: 12–18. The Indian medical texts, however, present this as advice on how to predetermine the sex of the child. *Suśruta Saṃhitā* II: 10 and *Caraka Saṃhitā* VII: 5. *Manu* voices the same ideas, III: 48–49, *The Laws of Manu* 1991: 48.

[23] The idea of a battle between female and male elements for the sex of the embryo is contained in several other medical traditions, for instance, the *Indian Bundahisn* Lincoln 1991: 219; medieval Europe Cadden 1993: 132; while Chinese medical texts say that the sex of the embryo is determined at conception through the predominance of *yin* or *yang* energies Furth 1999: 54, but also: 206–16.

[24] Parfionovitch 1992: I: 25, and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* II: 32. Significantly, these represent the two lineages that define Tibetan kinship structure and the permitted and forbidden marriage groups Lévi-Strauss 1969: 373–76; see also 393 ff for similar ideas in India and China.

the female on the left (plate 109, top row, fourth and fifth figure), while milk first appears in the right breast for a male and in the left for a female.[25] These left/right distinctions in the determination of sex introduce social and cultural assumptions about the relative value of the sexes, given the generally negative view of left in most early cultures, and the fact that South Asian etiquette requires the right side, which is the pure side, to be presented to any respected person or to any holy object that is circumambulated.

The number of factors influencing sexual characteristics at conception (karma, odd/even days, preponderance of semen or blood) and indications during gestation (dreams, left and right breasts, and sides of womb) are an attempt to contain what appears to be a rather fluid category and suggests some anxiety about the stability of sexual characteristics. Such anxiety and instability are dramatized in stories of adult sexual transformation, by ritual means to protect male babies from being transformed into female babies, and by practices to assure the transformation of females into males in the next life.[26]

What we see in all this is the human proclivity to sustain various points of view simultaneously, even if they are contradictory. Though karma determines sexual characteristics, karma can be altered by good deeds, such as making donations, and by performing religious acts such as circumambulations and so on (Samuel 1993: 199–222). In the same way, parents can influence the sex of their children in various ways and there are ritual means to stabilize and protect sexual characteristics, at least masculine ones. The *Rgyud bzhi* describes such a ritual for changing the sex of a female embryo into a male one:

> If someone wishes for a son, during the third and fourth week [after conception] the method of 'changing the centre' can be practiced. It can only be practiced before the child's sexual organs have developed. It can even be done during the first or second week. . . . The best day is that on which the star rGyal [the eighth nakṣatra, *puṣyā*] and Jupiter meet, but at least it should be a day ruled by the star rGyal. On that day a perfect smith should make a good image of a baby boy four fingers high . . . from black male iron . . . . On a subsequent day ruled by rGyal, one should heat the little figure in a charcoal fire . . . until it changes its colour. Then one should take two handfuls of milk of a cow that has male calves and pour

[25] *Suśruta Saṃhitā* III: 33 and *Caraka Saṃhitā* II: 23–25. Left/right distinctions are also represented in the Hippocratic corpus as determining the sex of the embryo, King 1998: 8, which continued into medieval medical thinking, Cadden 1993: 130.

[26] There is a lengthy discussion of sex change in Young 2004: 191–210.

> this into a vessel. One dips the little figure into the milk . . . . The husband takes one handful of this milk and gives it to his wife to drink. Then one takes equal amount of blood from a virgin girl and semen from a virgin boy and mixes them in molasses.[27]

Needless to say, the text does not provide a ritual to assure a female embryo. This ritual utilizes astrology, alchemy and magic, and it tells us that femaleness, the destiny of becoming a woman, is tentative—it can be changed. The message is that it is females who can and who need to change sex, who must acquire masculinity, in order to achieve spiritual and social status. This is connected to the Buddhist notion that men are more capable of achieving enlightenment than women or, in some cases, the belief that women are totally incapable of achieving enlightenment.[28]

It is also typical of these paintings to present the human body as male. To be female is to deviate from this norm due to bad karma and the dominant influence of the mother during conception; it is to be someone who by definition has received a lower form of birth. Except for pregnancy and a brief discussion of gynecological disorders, all the models are male, with women being a sidebar, or an afterthought, if they are mentioned at all, as in a painting (plate 112) on anatomy that shows one miniscule image of a partially clothed woman in order to illustrate the female orifices. When one considers that the medical texts were written by men for male doctors, this becomes understandable, if not laudable. The result, though, is that the paintings present women as nothing other than baby machines and sexual objects. The paintings depict an elite, male, monastic science and thus always show the physician as male and clothed in monastic robes.[29] Further, it is a science that distinguished itself from forms of healing practiced by women, such as the practices of midwives.

This emphasis on the male point of view is particularly brought out by a painting that displays rules for sexual intercourse entirely from the male perspective by imaging women as the objects of male desire and defining them as either acceptable or unacceptable female sexual partners. Unacceptable women are those married to others, unpleasant

[27] Rechung 1973: 33–34. This ritual is remarkably similar to the *puṃsavaṇa* rite in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, 4.8.19.

[28] See the discussion in Young 2004: 192–201.

[29] See, for example, AMNH 70.3/5466, 70.3/5500, 70.3/5517, 70.3/5518 and 70.3/5519. The one exception is the image of Btsan la lo ro, a female doctor, 70.3/5478, top register.

women, pregnant women, women weakened by hunger, and menstruating women (colour plate 113, third row, figures 2–6). The painting also depicts inappropriate sexual activity, such as sex with a married woman, or in front of a sacred image, in broad daylight, with any other woman but one's wife (colour plate 113, fifth row, eighth and ninth figure; sixth row, first and second figure). Women are presented only as sexual objects, without wills of their own to decide such matters. Importantly, by featuring women and denying these images a female point of view, men are protected from being portrayed as sexual objects. Further, the painting suggests that only the missionary position is acceptable. This is very much a monastic view of sexuality since anthropological data indicates that sexual practices were actually more relaxed.[30]

In conclusion, the scientific discourse on conception and gender, the presentation of the human body as exclusively male and of doctors as male, along with a persistent male point of view depicted in these paintings reified the secondary status of women among a powerful, influential and widespread male elite.

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[30] See, for example, Parfionovitch 1978: 60–66 137–38, 177, 179, 183–85.

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CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

*108. Fetal development, painted by Romio Shrestha after a Tibetan *thang ka*, Katmandu, late 1980s–early 1990s. New York, American Museum of National History (No. 70.3/5468).

109. Midwives. Detail of colour plate 108.

110. Channels of the body, painted by Romio Shrestha after a Tibetan *thang ka*, Katmandu, late 1980s–early 1990s. New York, American Museum of National History (No. 70.3/5475).

111. Detail of colour plate 108.

112. Anatomy with miniscule woman, painted by Romio Shrestha after a Tibetan *thang ka*, Kathmandu, late 1980s–early 1990s. New York, American Museum of National History (No. 70.3/5471).

*113. Conduct, painted by Romio Shrestha after a Tibetan *thang ka*, Katmandu, late 1980s–early 1990s. New York, American Museum of National History (No. 70.3/5483).

A PRESENT FROM THE TZAR

Sjoerd de Vries

INTRODUCTION

In the library of the Ethnographic Museum of Leiden, I found a rather neglected album with old photographs of Tibet.[1] This was remarkable, because most of the other photographical material in the museum collection is—by tradition—on the subject of the former Dutch colonial past: Indonesia, India, Ceylon, South America and so forth.

The date of these photographs was stated as AD 1901, which at first I thought was a mistake; as far as I knew the first photographs of Lhasa dated from 1905, when the Younghusband Expedition entered the city, and after which the famous reports by Austin Waddell and Percival Landon appeared, together with the photographs by—for instance—Claude White.[2] But closer looks at the photographs themselves and reading the old notes that were included in the album made me realize that the photos did indeed date from this very early time and that I was looking at the earliest—to my knowledge at least—photographic depictions of the Holy City![3]

The album contains a complete set of 50 gelatine prints of ca. 20 x 14 cm., each mounted on blindprinted carton with gilded numbers (plate 114) and fitted in a handsome box (which at this moment is in disrepair). With the set belongs a collection of documents with descriptions of each photograph; a handwritten list with descriptions of the photographs, together with an introduction on the two photographers.[4] Next to it are also three handwritten Dutch translations of later date,

[1] Library of the Rijksmuseum van Volkenkunde, Leiden, inv.nr. 531 CBI.

[2] Waddell 1975; Landon 1978; Hoffmann 1983: for instance p. 45–48; Reynolds 1999: figs 6–10.

[3] I wish to thank Mrs. Nandana Chutiwongs of the Ethnographic Museum, Leiden, for her assistance. My special gratitude is for Dr Alexander Andreyev from St. Petersburg, for providing information on Tsybikoff and Norzunov.

[4] In my opinion this a translation of the original text, written by Alexandre Gregoriev (also spelled Grigoriev), who later edited the book by Tsybikoff (Tsybikov 1992: 15).

with a lot of annotations, trying to identify the buildings and sites on the photographs.[5]

This gift was considered so important that it was published in the *Dutch State Journal*, the official paper of the Dutch Government, in which all the new laws, decisions etc. are noted.[6] "A highly important collection of fifty photographs of the curious temples and places in Central Tibet, and a gift of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society in 1904 to the Dutch State Ethnographic Museum". In total there were twelve albums sent from St. Petersburg. In the same paper there is a small article about one Mr. A. Grigoriev, former secretary of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society in St. Petersburg, who was awarded the Silver Honorary Medal by the Queen of the Netherlands. This Alexandre Grigoriev was the person who sent the album to Holland and who supplied the first rudimentary notes on the depictions. In these notes it is stated that the photographers were a certain Mr. Tsybikoff,[7] a Buryat, and Mr. Norzunov, a Kalmuk.

Some of these photographs have been published earlier (Richardus 1998: pls 1–8; Leonov 1991: 110), but only as illustrations, and not for their own merit. One of the photos is illustrated in Hoffmann 1983: 53, and comes from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. This photo is obviously part of another of those twelve sets, in this case presented by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society to the French *Société de Géographie*. I presume that different sets of these photographs were sent—for instance—to Berlin, Washington and London, although I have not yet been able to find out if in these, or other places, complete or incomplete sets of these photos still exist. At least one set should be kept in St. Petersburg. I have not yet been able to find out what happened to the original glassplates; they should be somewhere in the archives of the Geographical Society in St. Petersburg.[8]

That the Dutch Ethnographic Museum was presented with one of these sets may be explained by the fact that around 1900 this museum and the Oriental Department of Leiden University were quite famous

[5] One of these translations is dated January 1918 and mentions that is was translated from Russian by Dr C. H. Ebbinge Wubben.

[6] *Nederlandsche Staatscourant*, No. 209, 1904 (Wednesday, 7th September).

[7] The name of Tsybikoff is written differently in various publications: Tysbikoff; Tybikoff; Tsybikov.

[8] Oral information of Dr Alexander Adreyev from St Petersburg (September 2003); he states that there are original plates (in bad condition) by Norzunov and Tsybikoff, but it is not yet clear if these are the plates used for the Leiden album.

for its publications. Although the main focus of research was in the former Dutch Indies, much was done to disclose and translate buddhist texts; for instance the famous Sergei Oldenburg from St. Petersburg had close contacts with the the Kern Institute of Leiden University and with the Ethnographic Museum.

Earlier, in 1903, two small articles by one of the photographers, Tsybikoff, had been published, together with some of his photos of Lhasa. This was in the *Journal of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society* (written in Russian), in St. Petersburg and in the *Annual Reports of the Smithsonian Institute* in Washington (Tsybikoff 1903), but these articles have remained virtually unknown. The majority of the photos were shown in albums like the one in Leiden.

THE ALBUM

As said above, the album contains 50 photographs, taken by two Russian Buddhists. One was Gobonjab Tsybikoff, a Buryat from the Chori tribe, near Lake Baikal. He belonged to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and was educated accordingly. In the early years of the 20th century, he was a candidate in Eastern Languages of the University of St. Petersburg. The other photographer was Ovsje Norzunov, a Kalmuk of the Astrakhan clan, who was described by Gregoriev as almost illiterate.[9] Both were given a camera by the Geographical Society and travelled for a year as pilgrims to Central Tibet. Here they were able to make these first and unique photographs of Lhasa and its surroundings. The strange thing is that they travelled not together, but individually, unknown to the other.

After their return, their photos were collected in St. Petersburg in 1901 and later on provided with annotations by the already mentioned Alexander Gregoriev, who some years later had some of these collected in the form of this album.

Some Westerners had been able to travel in Tibet before 1901 (Sandberg 1973; Hopkirk 1982). There had been even some foreigners in Lhasa, but no Western travellers since Father Huc in 1849 (Huc 1852; Hopkirk 1982: 72).

[9] Gregoriev n.d.: 1; see below footnote 19.

Photographs of Tibet before this date are very rare. There are some pictures taken in Western and Central Tibet, for instance by the French explorer Henry d'Orléans in 1890 (Hoffmann 1983: 57–63, 151), who even managed to come within a two day march from Lhasa, before being forced back. Also we have some photos by the famous Swedish traveller Sven Hedin, who travelled in 1901 (in which period Tsybikoff and Norzunov were in Lhasa) in Northern and Western Tibet and also tried in vain to reach Lhasa, disguised as a pilgrim (Hopkirk 1982: 157–58; Hoffmann 1983: 81–93). No photographs however seem to exist of Lhasa itself before 1901.

THE GREAT GAME

Only a handful of foreigners did gain entry to the Holy City in the late 19th century. This is the period of the so-called 'Great Game', the struggle between England and Russia to gain influence over Central Asia and the Tibetan plateau.[10]

From British India, the English sent disguised Indians—the so-called Pandits—to Tibet, to spy and find out facts about this virtually unknown territory. At least three of those Pandits reached Lhasa and managed to stay for some time in the city: Nain Singh in 1866; Kishan Singh in 1880; and the most famous of them, Sarat Chandra Das, in 1881–1882. In Sarat Chandra Das' *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, which was eventually published in 1902, we find another photo of the Potala in Lhasa, made by a member of the Nepalese embassy in Beijing.[11]

This Great Game between Russia and England reached a climax when a Buryat monk, Agvan Dorjieff, came from Russia to Tibet, studied for a long time at Drepung monastery and became intimate with the 13th Dalai Lama. When the British found out that Dorjieff travelled a couple of times between St. Petersburg and Lhasa and tried to convince the 13th Dalai Lama to put his faith in the Russian Empire, they had to react. Moreover, the British were quite upset when they learned about Tsybikoff delivering a lecture in St. Petersburg, in 1903, on his experi-

[10] See for instance: Hopkirk 1982; Fleming 1986; Richardson 1984.

[11] Das 1902: opp. 166. So there is a slight possibility that this photo is even older than the photos by Tsybikoff and Norzunov.

ences in Lhasa. They actually thought a huge network of Russian Buryats might be active in Tibet.[12]

All this culminated in the famous expedition led by Francis Younghusband in 1904–1905, which definitively made the Tibetan government look more to the British than to the Russians for aid and advice. What happened afterwards is well known: the collapse of the Qing dynasty; the semi-independance of Tibet under the 13th Dalai Lama; and the Communist Revolution in Russia in 1917, which ended the Russian aspiration for control over Central Asia and Tibet for some time.

During the same period as Tsybikoff and Norzunov, the Japanese Ekai Kawaguchi stayed in Lhasa, also for more than one year (Berry 1989). It is odd that neither the Russians nor the Japanese mentioned the other in their narratives.

Just as the British Indian Pandits are now well-known—by their own or other publications—so their Russian counterparts are unknown to us in the West. As followers of Tibetan Buddhism, it was quite easy for Buryats and Kalmuks to travel as pilgrims to Tibet and stay for considerable time in Lhasa or one of the great monasteries for education. In Lhasa there was even a special building to house pilgrims from Buryatia.[13] That is how Dorjieff came to Lhasa and also how hundreds of other Russian nationals could travel to the Holy City.

TSYBIKOFF AND NORZUNOV

The better known of the two photographers is Tsybikoff (plate 115, left). He had a good education, and after his return from Lhasa he published some articles and much later a more detailed narrative of his journey, illustrated with many of his photographs. This publication, however, was in Russian and therefore almost unknown in the West.[14] It was published in French in 1992 (Tsybikov 1992), but strangely

[12] This network was supposed to have been masterminded by a Dutchman (?), a certain Mr De Groot (Fleming 1986: 82).

[13] Gregoriev n.d.: 2, mentions the former palace of the Lhasa 'Kings', Ganden Kang Shar, near the Ramoche temple (see photos 2 and 12 of the album, plates 116 and 120).

[14] This book, *Buddist-palommik u suyatin Tibeta* (*Buddhist Pilgrim at the Sacred Places in Tibet*) was published in Petrograd in 1918 (Leonov: p. 111). It took so long to publish it, because of the sudden death of the original editor, Alexandre Gregoriev (Tsybikov 1982: 15).

enough this French publication was not illustrated with the original photos, but with engravings after photos, taken by the Russian Prince Uchomsky in Mongolia.[15]

Tsybikoff was born in the village of Ourda-Aga, in Transbaikalia, in April 1873 (in the official papers the date 1872 is indicated, because the Buryats count the moment of conception as birth-date). After a local education he went in 1884 to the local Russian Lyceum in Tchita, which was quite exceptional for a Buryat boy. He finished school there in 1893 as the first Buryat student. After a period in Urga, Mongolia, in 1895 he went to St Peterburg to study oriental languages. There he was selected to make the journey to Lhasa.[16]

He left for Urga in December 1899, from where he travelled to Kumbum monastery in Amdo. There he joined a group of Buryat pilgrims, heading for Lhasa, where he arrived in August 1900. He stayed more than a year in Central Tibet, mostly in Lhasa, but he also travelled around to the major monasteries and places. Besides the clandestine bussiness of making pictures, he collected 319 Tibetan books (Tsybikoff 1903: 727), which he sent back home. He left Lhasa late in 1901 and was back in Russia in April 1902.

After this journey he delivered the famous lecture of 1903 in St Petersburg and received a medal for his explorations. Afterwards he was appointed as assistant at the Oriental Institute at Vladivostok, where he stayed until 1917.[17] It sounds amazing that somebody who did such a remarkable thing, who provided so much unique material for his superiors, was sent away afterwards to such an outpost as Vladivovstok to spend his life. He died in St. Petersburg in 1930.[18]

About Ovje Norzunov (plate 115, right), we know almost nothing except that, according to the notes written by Gregoriev, he was virtually illiterate.[19] He lived from 1874(?) until the 1930s;[20] we do not know

[15] These illustrations are better known from the famous book by Grünwedel 1900.

[16] Tsybikoff was a pupil of the well-known Russian orientalist Podsneev, who had edited the diary of a Kalmuk lama, named Basa, who had made a trip to Tibet in 1891–1894 (Leonov 1991: 110).

[17] Tsybikov 1982: 20; personal communication from Alexandre Andreyev, 17th April 2004.

[18] His biography was written by J.D. Dorjiev and A.M. Kondratov (1990), *Gombojab Tsybikov*, Irkutsk (personal communication from Alexandre Andreyev, 17th April 2004).

[19] Gregoriev n.d.: 1. Andreyev, on the other hand, told me that Norzunov was highly intelligent and of noble birth. He visited Paris three times (in 1898, 1900 and 1902),

why he was selected for this trip (or his other trips). He travelled together with Dorjieff, at least during the time he met Tsybikoff in Lhasa, in February 1901 (Tsybikov 1992: 140). The British, however, had an encounter with him before that; in 1900 he was detained in Darjeeling, having entered India from Tibet illegally and they had him deported from India. The British suspected him to be a spy, due to the fact that he had a letter of introduction to the French Consul in Calcutta and had a connection, as discovered by the Darjeeling police, with 'a very rich lama called Darjilicoff'.[21] Altogether he travelled three times to Lhasa, between 1898 and 1901.[22]

Both men were supplied with cameras by the Russian Geographical Society; they both got the same camera, a French 'selfworker', made by the Paris-based firm Rinon, with astigmatic lenses, series III, both serial No. 00. The negative size was 6? x 9 cm., which was revolutionary small for that time. We know that Norzunov used French plates from Lumière, while Tsybikoff used 'Empress' plates from the English firm Ilford.[23]

When the photos were collected in St Petersburg after their travels, the Secretary of the Geographical Society, Alexandre Gregoriev, collected the related information, first from Tsybikoff and later on also from a certain Möndökzjoc, a Buryat who had been in Lhasa in 1893, as well as from some other Buryats who had travelled in Tibet. Gregoriev supplied the handwritten information that came with the album to Holland. It is interesting how detailed some of the information on the photos read, and how on the other hand it is sometimes so utterly wrong on major issues.

So we have the situation that in 1900, independent and unknown to each other, two Buryat Russians travelled to Lhasa, armed with identical cameras and equipment, and were able to make a collection of photos. What is strange about this is the fact that the two met each other in Lhasa by chance. Tsybikoff writes in his narratives (Tsybikov 1992: 140) that on the 26th February 1901 (Russian calender, so 10th March in

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together with Dorjieff (personal communication from Alexandre Andreyev, 17th April 2004).

[20] Personal communication from Alexandre Andreyev, 17th April 2004.

[21] Fleming 1986: 82 (he is called here Norzanoff).

[22] Personal communication from Alexandre Andreyev, 17th April 2004.

[23] Gregoriev n.d.:1. These cameras were possibly hidden in Buddhist prayer-wheels, much like the instruments used by the British-Indian Pandits.

our calendar) he met the Kalmuk Ovsje Norzunov, who was in the company of a certain 'Dorjiev', and that this Norzunov had the same kind of camera as he had. Even stranger is the remark that Tsybikoff hid his own camera from Norzunov, as if he did not trust him. The fact that Norzunov was in the company of the famous Dorjieff, who was the spider in the web of intrigue at the time, and that Tsybikoff did not trust Norzunov, gives a very interesting extra dimension on this small-scale Great Game play in Lhasa.[24] Besides this brief encounter the two men do not seem to have spent more time together; Tsybikoff does not mention Norzunov again in his narrative.

THE PHOTOS

The most interesting of the photographs, for the purpose of this paper, are of course those of Lhasa and its surroundings, but both Russians travelled also in the provinces of U and Tsang. Also in this case the written commentary and especially the later published narrative by Tsybikoff give very interesting information. Not only is Tsybikoff a very good observer, who talked a lot with local people about all kinds of subjects, but also he provides us with a very detailed survey of the Tibetan political situation at this time, just before the forceful British invasion and radical change of politics in Lhasa.

One has to understand that—even in the case of a person like Tsybikoff who was completely Tibetan Buddhist by birth and education—these Buryats and Kalmuks were as foreign in Tibet as Western Europeans would be. Tsybikoff (1903: 732) writes about the Tibetan people indeed as a foreigner. He writes for instance: "The principal characteristics of the Central Tibetans may be described as stupidity and flattery, doubtlessly explained by the economic and political conditions in the country. They are also pious through fear of losing the protection of the gods or of angering them."

Of the 50 photographs in the album, 32 were made by Norzunov, and only 18 by Tsybikoff. It is remarkable that most of the photos of Lhasa and its surroundings were taken by Norzunov, while the photos in other parts of the country (Gyantse, Shigatse, Ganden, Samye and the

[24] However, in later literature the role of Dorjieff as a spy in the 'Great Game' is very much diminished; Fleming 1986: 42–48, 82–83; Hopkirk 1982: 154–55; Richardson 1984: 81–82.

Tradrug temple in the Yarlung Valley) are mainly by Tsybikoff. Yet also Norzunov travelled outside Lhasa; he was in Shigatse and visited Tashi Lhunpo monastery, he was also at Ganden. Of course we do not know how and why these photos were selected, and I suppose the original collection must have been much larger. There is a handwritten note in the German commentary that both men made 122 negatives in total.[25]

One feature strikes immediately; one sees almost no people in the pictures. Lhasa seems completely devoid of life, and when one sees people, then it is almost always from the back or from a great distance. Obviously the photographers had to work more or less under cover, and could not risk exposing themselves. Initially I was intrigued by the fact that no picture of the most important temple of Lhasa, the Tsuglhakhang (Jokhang), was included, but later on I realized that no one could have taken such a picture without being exposed; the Jokhang could not be photographed from a distance and there of course were always too many people around. Therefore, there are no photos of the centre of Lhasa.

Of the 50 photographs in the album, the first 20 are of the city of Lhasa itself. Nos 21–32 depict the immediate surroundings of Lhasa: the monasteries of Sera, Drepung, Nechung and Phurbu Chog, as well the Kyichu Valley. The others depict various landscapes and monuments in Central, South-Western and Southern Tibet, such as Gyantse, Tashi Lhunpo, Yerpa, Ganden, Samye and the Yarlung Valley. Of the 32 photographs of Lhasa and its surroundings, 26 were taken by Norzunov. Of the remaining 18 photographs of the other places in Central Tibet, 12 were taken by Tsybikoff.

In this paper it is not possible to show all the photos of the album, so I have selected the most interesting ones, all taken in Lhasa:

No. 1. Lhasa from the east, by Norzunov (plate 114).
One can see the Chagpori hill in the middle and the Potala on the right. On the far right one can see Meru Ling, The Upper School of Tantric Studies.

No. 2. Ganden Kang Shar and Ramoche, by Norzunov (plate 116).
The Ganden Kang Shar was one of the rare secular buildings with

[25] Gregoriev n.d.: 1. See also note 8.

four/five storeys.[26] It was built in the early 17th century as a palace for the local Lhasa 'Kings', by Gyume Namgyal, and was in use until 1751.[27] From this building the Capuchin missionary Orazio della Penna got his passport in 1735, when he finally left Tibet. Tsybikoff tells us that the building stood empty and was used to house mainly Buryat pilgrims in Lhasa.

No. 4. Potala from the south, by Norzunov (plate 117).

No. 6. Potala with *thang kas*, by Tsybikoff (plate 118).
The Potala during the so-called Tsog Chöd festival, on the 29th day of the 2nd month (5/18th April 1901).[28] The *thang ka*s depict Śākyamuni and White Tārā, according to Tsybikoff,[29] but in fact both *thang kas* depict Buddhas, Śākyamuni and Maitreya(?).[30] A huge crowd stands on the Marpori hill, below the Potala palace. Tsybikoff calls the procession, which he witnessed on the 18th April 1900, 'Ser threng', the 'Golden Procession' (Tsybikov 1982: 148). Another photograph of the same subject, but of a much better quality, was published and attributed first to Tsybikoff, then to Norzunov (both impossibly dated 1900!) and finally to Alexandra David-Neel![31]

No. 9. Potala and Lingkhor from the north-west, by Norzunov (plate 119).
An interesting detail in this picture are the birds, seen on the right. People living inside the Lingkhor were not allowed to kill animals, so they disposed of their too many cocks by bringing them to this place at the Lingkhor and leaving them (Gregoriev n.d.: 6).

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[26] Gregoriev n.d.: 2; Henss 1981: ill. p. 48.

[27] Henss 1981: 49; on the Lhasa 'Kings'; see for instance Snellgrove and Richardson 1980: 205; Richardson 1998: 390–93, 428–29.

[28] Gregoriev n.d.: 4; Tsybikov 1982: 148–49. Tsybikoff uses the Julian calendar, which was abandoned after the October Revolution of 1917. His dates differ 13 days from those in the Gregorian calendar.

[29] Gregoriev n.d.: 4–5; Tsybikov 1982: 149.

[30] According to a handwritten note by Charles Bell to a photo of the same subject, now in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (BL H 165–67).

[31] Reynolds 1999: 110; Reynolds/Heller 1983: 36; *Tibet, A Hidden World—1905–1935*; Reynolds 1978: 8, 128. Reynolds mentions that this photo was found in Lhasa by Suydam Cutting in 1935 (*sic*). This shows how difficult it is still to analyse these early photographs. In my opinion this photo was taken by Alexandra David-Neel

No. 12. The Ganden Kang Shar, by Norzunov (plate 120).
The former palace of the Lhasa ‘Kings’, near the Ramoche temple, dating from the beginning of the 17th century, not any more extant.[32]

No. 13. Yutog Samba, seen from the west, by Norzunov (plate 121).
The famous Turquoise Bridge, between the Potala Palace and the city of Lhasa. This building still exists, has been restored and now functions as a shop.

No. 14. Bar Chöten, seen from the east, by Tsybikoff (plate 122).
This photo was published in Hoffmann 1983: 53. The famous western gate of Lhasa was destroyed in 1959 and reconstructed in 1994 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

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in March, 1924: in the small museum dedicated to her life and travels, in Digne (France), there is another one, together with a photo illustrated by Reynolds 1999: 112, and attributed by the same again to Tsybikoff(?), dated 1900. See also Hoffmann 1983: 72.

[32] Gregoriev n.d.: 7; Henss 1981: ill. p. 48. The illustration in Henss is a drawing and published in *Le Tour du Monde* (1904), done after this photograph.

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A NEWLY-DISCOVERED OLD PERSPECTIVE DRAWING OF LHASA

KNUD LARSEN

ABSTRACT

The discovery in 2002 of a largely unknown type of artistic representation of Old Lhasa in the form of a Western style bird's eye perspective is an important supplement to the relatively few maps and photographs, Western and Tibetan, which have until recently been the visual sources for understanding the topography of the town before the year 1950. The drawing can be read as a three-dimensional map but also gives important clues to the appearance and location of several important now demolished buildings.

Only a superficial investigation of the drawing is presented here, however it is supposed that much valuable historic information remains to be extracted from it. The discoverer has found its early publication important to make it available to the community of Tibetologists.

DISCOVERY

Old Lhasa had a fairly simple topography and during my work with *The Lhasa Atlas* (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen 2001) I searched many archives and collections for old maps and drawings of the town. I therefore had a clear understanding of its structure when in September 2002 I came across a large, old drawing which I immediately recognized as showing the centre of Old Lhasa. This was in Kathmandu and the climate was apparently not friendly to this piece of artwork. Insects engaged in eating the paper were crawling under the glass of the framed drawing which had also broken into several pieces crudely held together by being glued onto a sheet of simple, black cardboard.

A rescue operation at the paper laboratory of the Danish National Museum luckily restored the drawing to almost its former splendour.

DESCRIPTION

The drawing, 50 x 66 cm, shows the main southern part of central Lhasa seen in a bird's eye perspective from southwest. The perspective of the urban structure is of a Western type with depth and converging lines. The detail is great. Most buildings are shown with the correct number of floors and windows, and people and animals inhabit courtyards and streets [see plate 123].

The drawing is done in Indian ink with application of watercolour and gold paint (on the roofs of religious buildings). On the main roof of the central building (Jokhang) a layer of leaf gold in relief is applied. The short-fibred rice paper is smooth, thin and rather brittle. There is no artist's signature or any indication of who made the drawing or when.

Most of the buildings within the area defined by the present-day Lingkor Lam to the south, Dosenge Lam to the west, Beijing Lam to the north and the mountains to the east are shown on the drawing. In addition to the Jokhang temple in the exact middle of the drawing, many of the other major buildings are easily identifiable, such as: Tengyeling Monastery in the left foreground; Yabshi Phünkhang, Rigsum North Chapel, Jebumkhang Temple, Gyume and Meru Monasteries, Tromsekhang on Barkor North; Darpoling Temple, Meru Nyingba Monastery behind the Jokhang; Phala, Karmashar Temple, Labrang Nyingba, Pomdatsang and Samdrub Podrang on Barkor South; Shatra, Gorka, Pode Khangsar, Kunsangtse and the big mosque at the Muslim market to the far east.

The greater part of these buildings still exist and reflects the exactness of detail to the extent that it is possible to identify small irregular structures that are still in place, like the little ladder leading from the first floor roof of Jokhang temple to the second floor roof. Also the now destroyed superstructure of the otherwise preserved Jebumkhang temple is correctly drawn as can be seen when comparing the drawing with older photographs [see plate 126].[1] This fact makes all the more worthwhile the study of buildings that no longer exist, such as Tengyeling monastery. This building situated in the very foreground is drawn in great detail. I have never searched specifically for photographs of Tengyeling in my archive studies, but I have looked through hun-

[1] E.g. an unpublished photograph by Hugh Richardson in the British Museum.

dreds of photographs of old Lhasa architecture and not yet come across any rendering of Tengyeling; this drawing therefore could probably be the best existing visual presentation of it [see plate 124].

There is no doubt many other interesting observations to be made by a careful comparative historical study of each building. Even this superficial investigation has revealed a few: at the lower edge to the right the residency of the Ambans is seen. A Chinese gate, like the one found today at the old mosque, leads into the courtyard where two stone lions[2] flank the entrance to the main one-storey building. In the inner courtyard a couple of horses can be seen inside a shed. Two high poles topped by a kind of basket in the outer courtyard are perhaps meant for illumination by fire. One may see pigsties just above the Ambans' residence and the Chinese theatre on a corner.[3]

The two neighbouring buildings of Phala and Karmashar east of Barkor are among those easily recognisable. A little north of Karmashar the drawing shows a small chapel with a stupa on the street in front of it. On this site a secular house called Shalho Menkhang[4] (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen 2001: No. 186) is situated today. Both Aufschnaiter (1948) and Taring (1959) show a religious building on the site in their maps. This is a rare example of a religious building being demolished to make way for a secular building and the drawing gives a vague impression of what the chapel looked like. What might be especially interesting about this chapel is that it possibly could be the East Rigsum Chapel [see plate 125].[5] The four Rigsum protector chapels were built in the 7th century on a circular circumambulation path with a radius of well 300 meters centred in the Jokhang Temple. The North and South Rigsum Chapels still exist while the West Rigsum Chapel was destroyed with the establishment of the Yutok Road.[6] The location of the East Rigsum Chapel has, to our knowledge, not been exactly determined.

[2] Like the ones to be seen today in front of Shöl.

[3] According to the map by Waddell (1905: 330).

[4] This house is dated to 1905 in the atlas, a date which must now be doubted in the light of the information in Aufschnaiter's and Taring's maps.

[5] Aufschnaiter (1948: Lhasa map) and Taring (1959: Lhasa map) call it Yulring (Yunring) Lhakhang.

[6] The West Rigsum Chapel was re-erected in the courtyard of a new residential block on the corner of Luguk Road and the western extension of Barkor South.

DATE

As to dating the drawing, only one clue has till now been found. A closer study of the development of Lhasa and its buildings will undoubtedly give better dating clues, but at present it can only be said that the drawing must date from before 1912, when Tengyeling monastery was partly destroyed following the controversy connected with the expulsion of the Ambans from Tibet.

PRODUCTION

Another question is how the drawing was done.

There is little doubt that the artist at least partly aimed at a Western type of central perspective. It is also evident that he did not know much about the contemporary Western rules for this type of representation.

The very basic Western rules of central perspective are that there is one fixed viewpoint and that every point of the scene is projected onto the picture plane via a straight line connecting the point with the viewpoint through the picture plane. A convenient means of help to construct the perspective is the fact that the extension of all parallel, horizontal lines in the scene converge to meet in one point on the horizon, which is a horizontal line at level with the viewpoint.

A natural first thought is that the view in this drawing must be from a mountain. But anyone familiar with the topography of Lhasa will know that there is no mountain, which enables one to see the town like this.

An attempt to reconstruct the position of the viewpoint shows that there is no singular viewpoint. The viewpoint ‘moves around’. The closest one comes to pinpointing it is to say that the viewpoint is found around 200–300 meters above the Thieves’ Island in the Kyichu River. The only way to get there at that time would have been by balloon, which of course can effectively be ruled out.

The drawing is thus a construction made in the artist’s studio. With little knowledge of the rules of perspective, he may have first sketched the overall street pattern on the paper and then, after a meticulous survey of each building and detail of the town—a job which may have taken months—fitted them into the drawing on their appropriate sites.

What we have is therefore more than a bird's-eye rendering of a town: it is a visual catalogue of buildings and town features compiled through intensive, detailed research.

An evident break of the rules of perspective is represented by the mountains in the background. Again, anyone familiar with Lhasa will see that they are much too small and distant. In fact the mountains should not have been visible at all in the drawing, considering the chosen location of the viewpoint and the size of the paper. To break one's own rules like this may have been a conscious choice in order to show more of the topography than a proper perspective actually allows, even if it added to the abstraction of the picture. In this respect the artist places his drawing as type somewhere in between the traditional Tibetan pilgrim's map,[7] which tries to compress as much information as possible into a given sheet of paper, and the Western type perspective, which comes close to a photograph.

SIMILAR DRAWINGS

During the research for *The Lhasa Atlas* I had never come across anything similar to this drawing and I first thought it to be unique. However, a catalogue (in Japanese) from an exhibition of Tibetan objects collected by Bunkyou Aoki in Tibet at Ryukoku University in Kyoto in September 2002, almost on the exact date when I found the drawing in Nepal, shows a large *thang ka* with a similar drawing of Old Lhasa. The exhibition was attached to an international symposium at the same university,[8] entitled "Art and Culture of Tibetan Peoples".

The *thang ka*, measuring 134 x 168 cm, belongs to the Omiya Library at Ryukoku University. It is a collage of 6 sheets of paper on which is drawn and painted a bird's-eye-view of Lhasa including the Potala and Chakpori. The central part of the Old Town is seen from exactly the same viewpoint as the Kathmandu drawing. In addition there is a separate bird's-eye-view of Norbulingka, also coloured, and four maps in different scale of Tibet and Lhasa, cut from books. Two of the maps are by Waddell (1905: 327–30). Finally there are some small

[7] Example of a pilgrim's map (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen 2001: 20–21)
[8] 13^{th}–14^{th} September 2002.

panels with explanatory texts. In the lower right corner a title is handwritten (in English) in blue ink "The Bird's eye sketch of "Lhasa" by a Nepalese Photographer of Lhasa in 1905–1915".[9]

The style of drawing and the colours are so similar to the Kathmandu drawing that there is little doubt that the two drawings were made by the same artist.

Aoki Bunkyo was one of several Zen monks sent out by their abbot, Kozui Otani, on long expeditions to China, Nepal and Tibet from 1902 to 1916 to collect thousands of artefacts and texts. On his last trip Aoki Bunkyo entered Tibet from Nepal in September 1912 and stayed on until 1916. It is supposed that he acquired the map and mounted it together with the other maps as a thang ka. The latter apparently stayed with his family since it was donated to the Omiya Library by his nephew Shoshin Aoki.[10]

A friend sent me a poor black-and white copy of a third Lhasa drawing, which he himself had copied from a book years ago. Unfortunately he was not able to retrace the book. This drawing has the same viewpoint as the other two but is cropped, so that Tengyeling, the Amban's Residence and Lingkor South are cut away. It seems to be by the same artist and from about the same time; but, apart from that, little can be said about it because the quality of the print is too poor. However it seems to have somewhat less detail than the Kathmandu drawing.

SPECULATIONS

My first thought was that the Kathmandu drawing could be the original sketch, made on location, while the more complete *thang ka*, the Ryukoku drawing, as the final result, could have been executed in Kathmandu. However, the drawing is much more detailed than the *thang ka* and there are interesting differences in the shape of buildings. The drawing can therefore hardly be the 'blueprint' for the *thang ka*.

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[9] The *thang ka* border is yellow brocade with blue and red flowers and white leaf work.

[10] The nephew was the chief priest of Shofukuji temple (at Aoki Bunkyo's birthplace) in Shiga Prefecture; he is now deceased (Mazumi Mitani in a lecture at the symposium and in a letter to myself). Unfortunately a close study of the Ryukoku *thang ka* has not been possible since the Omiya Library has been uncooperative.

The buildings in the Ryukoku drawing are not drawn with as much care and detail as in the Kathmandu drawing. One example is Tengyeling Monastery, which is very poorly drawn in the Ryukoku drawing, but which is the most detailed and nicely drawn building in the Kathmandu drawing. On closer examination[11] there are also strange differences in the type of perspective used. The vertical lines close to the right and left edges of the Ryukoku drawing 'lean' towards the centre. It seems as if the artist would compensate for the bird's-eye-view. In fact this may be done, but in order to achieve such compensation with a Western perspective the lines should have leaned the other way. On the two other drawings true vertical lines are simply drawn vertical and the result looks more correct.

One could speculate that at the outset the artist was totally unfamiliar with the laws of Western perspective: he simply tried his best and refined his technique as he produced his series of drawings. The Ryukoku drawing would thus represent the first rather primitive attempt, an assumption that is supported by the fact that the number of buildings in the Amban's residency area is lower than in the Kathmandu drawing, which means that more buildings were added at a later date.

The black and white copy drawing seems to be a bit simpler in detail than the Kathmandu drawing, which would also place it at an earlier date.

The Ryukoku drawing is put together from 6 sheets of paper approximately of the same size as the Kathmandu drawing. This could indicate that this size, 50 x 66 cm, was the size of paper available to the artist in Lhasa. One could also speculate that the Kathmandu drawing is only a part of a 6-piece drawing of the entire town similar to the Ryukoku drawing, which might mean that the missing parts are still to be found in Kathmandu. However, if the dating is correct (pre-1912) and if the Kathmandu drawing was part of a 6-sheet intended collage, then why did Bunkyo Aoki not choose this drawing, it being much more detailed and attractive than the one he actually bought, since it

[11] After the demise of Michael Aris, a folder marked '5 prints Map-thangka of Lhasa' was found in his archive containing five otherwise unidentified photographic prints (10 x15 cm). Later it turned out that the 'Map-thangka' is identical with the Ryukoku *thang ka*. Unfortunately the prints are of poor quality (the best one is shown in plate 127); however the quality is sufficient to permit this examination.

can be assumed still to have been in the possession of the artist (because he brought it back to Nepal)? The obvious answer could be that such a 6-piece set never existed.

An IATS X participant [André Alexander] related that in some Lhasa homes he had seen photographic copies of the Kathmandu drawing. This would make sense if the artist really was a photographer and if the original purpose of the drawings was to sell copies of them to Lhasa citizens.

It might also explain why he gave up drawing large sceneries of all of Lhasa after doing the Ryukoku drawing. Photographs at that time had a limited size and if people were to buy a photograph it must be because their own house was visible, which would not be the case if the photo included all of the Lingkor area. The photograph had to be only of the area where most customers lived. That is perhaps also why the more poor[12] and sparsely inhabited Ramoche area was cut away from the Kathmandu drawing.

If the artist was a photographer (here it should be underlined that there is at the moment only one source to this assumption: the title of the Ryukoku drawing) maybe he did his surveys by means of photography. In that case a rich treasure of historic photographs from Old Lhasa is possibly awaiting discovery.

The title of the Ryukoku drawing also says that this photographer was Nepalese. A Nepalese photographer at that time must with great probability have come from the most advanced part of Nepal, the Kathmandu valley, which means that he was a Newar. Another IATS X participant pointed out that the style of the foliage and the presence of shadows to human figures in the Kathmandu drawing cannot be found in Tibetan or Newar painting. The artist, he claimed, could therefore neither be Tibetan nor Nepalese. Not being an art historian I'm unable to enter this discussion, but being a practitioner of drawing and perspective construction I would find it quite possible that especially a photographer, without any artistic ambitions, would use the photograph and not traditional art as model for his attempts to draw the desired representation of Lhasa, which he could not do by photographic means alone.

With the reservation in mind that the artist really was a Newar photographer and not Bunkyo Aoki himself or some third person, it is

[12] Poor—at least in terms of the smaller number of large secular houses in the Ramoche area compared to the Barkor area.

tempting to try to imagine a possible scenario: first the artist did the full scale Ryukoku drawing (and after some years sold it to Bunkyo Aoki); then he realized that people wanted such drawings and that the demand could be met by photographic copies if the depicted area was reduced so that each building would be identifiable. The first try was the black-and-white copy, which turned out to be too small because quite a number of potential customers lived outside the chosen area.[13]

Finally he increased the area somewhat and made the Kathmandu drawing, which became the primary basis for his sale of photographic copies in Lhasa. The original Kathmandu drawing pleased him so much that he brought it back to his hometown Kathmandu, where it surfaced ninety years later.

To confirm, reject or elaborate on these speculations a close study of the Ryukoku *thang ka* is indispensable. I must be hoped that the Omiya Library will allow such study in the near future.

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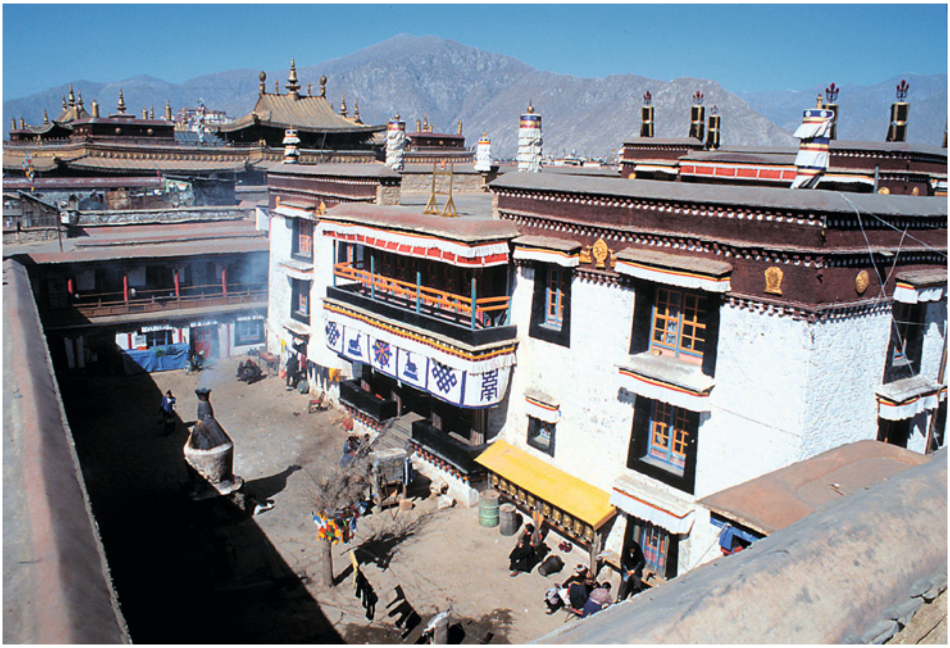
CAPTIONS TO PLATES IN PLATE SECTION

123. The "Kathmandu drawing", bird's-eye perspective of central Lhasa by an unknown artist, before 1912, Indian ink and watercolour on paper, 50 x 66 cm (Private collection, Oslo).
124. Tengyeling monastery, detail of the Kathmandu drawing.
125. East Rigsum chapel (?) (left) and Karmashar temple (right), detail of the Kathmandu drawing.
126. Jebumkhang temple and north Rigsum chapel, detail of the Kathmandu drawing.
127. Detail of the Ryukoku *thang ka*. (Photo: M. Aris).

[13] The poor quality of the black-and-white copy might be attributable to the fact that it is perhaps reproduced from one of his photographs.

LIST OF PLATES

Note: an asterisk before a plate number signifies that the illustration is in colour.



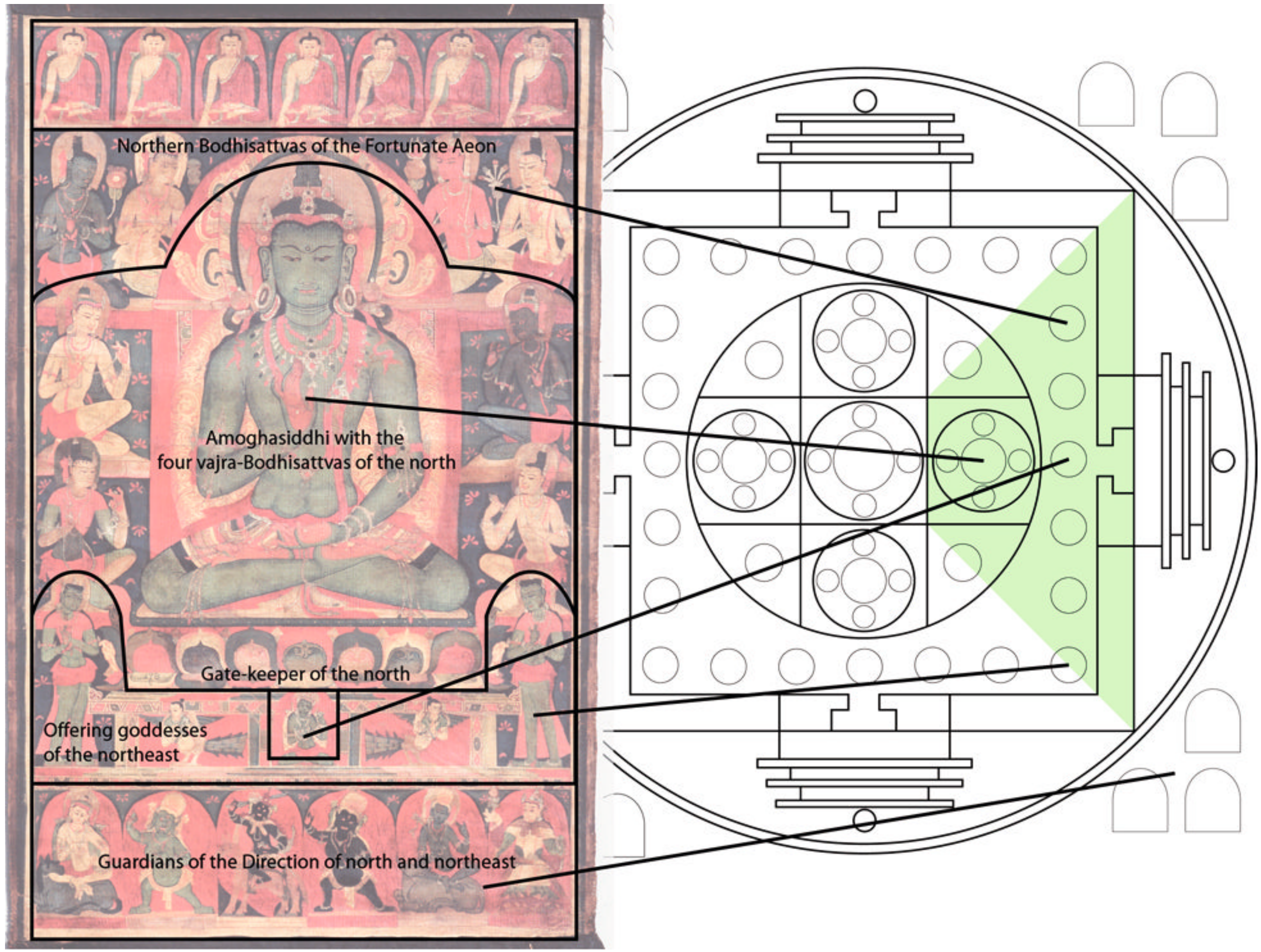
1 Courtyard, south elevation of the *’du khang*. (Photo: A. Alexander, 2000).



2 Dzam bha la chapel, southern part of the sanctum. (Photo: J. Mueller, 2003).



7 Amoghasiddhi of the northern quarter of a Vajradhātumaṇḍala (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection).



8 Comparison of the Amoghasiddhi *thang ka* with the full mandala representation in Dungkar (Drawing: C. Luczanits).



9 Akṣobhya of the eastern quarter of a Vajradhātu-related mandala (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection).



10 Ratnasambhava of the sourthern quarter of a Vajradhātu-related mandala with 1000 Buddhas, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (The Avery Brundage Collection, 1991.1).



11 Vairocana in the centre of a Vajradhātu-related mandala with 1000 Buddhas, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (The Avery Brundage Collection, 1991.1).



15 Vairocana, The Cleveland Museum of Art (Mr and Mrs William Marlatt Fund, 1989.104). (After Kossak and Singer 1998: No.13)



16 Amoghasiddhi, detail of the head in plate 7 (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection).



17 Uṣṇīṣavijayā, The Hermitage Museum, St.Petersburg (X-2469). (After: Piotrovsky 1993: No.15).





19 Akṣobhya, detail of the leg in plate 9 (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection).

←
18 Detail of the throne back in plate 9 (Private collection). (Photo: owner of the collection).



22 Mahattārī Tārā, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Asiatic Society, Calcutta (No.A 15, fol. 103v). (Photo: E. Allinger, No. 492/16).



23 Tārā, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Asiatic Society, Calcutta (No. A 15, fol. 113r). (Photo: E. Allinger, No. 492/18).



24 Lokeśvara, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Asiatic Society, Calcutta (No. A 15, fol. 145v). (Photo: E. Allinger, No. 492/24).



29 Four *navagrahas*, wall painting of the *mgon khang* at Lcang Sgang kha.



30 Gza' zla ba, the *navagraha* Candra.



31 Dga' bo, the *nāgarāja* Nanda.



32 Nor rgyas bu, the *nāgarāja* Vāsuki.



33 Khrums smad, the 25th constellation.



34 Khrums stod, the 24th constellation.



35 Khrums smad, the 25th constellation (detail).



36 Khrums stod, the 24th constellation (detail).



37 Bya'u, the 12th constellation.



38 Bra nye, the 17th constellation.



42 Śākyamuni *gos sku*, Gyantse Dpal ’khor chos sde, 1437/39, appliqué silk brocade, ca. 22.5x22.5 m. (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).



47 Maitreya *gos sku*, Gyantse Dpal 'khor chos sde, 1437/39, appliqué silk brocade, ca. 23x27 m. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).



48 Avalokiteśvara, detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).



49 Sems dpa' chen po kyi rin chen (13th century), abbot of Gnas rnying, detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).



50 Paṇ chen Śrī Śāriputra, abbot of Bodhgaya (in Gyantse in 1418), detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).



51 Paṇ chen Śrī Śāriputra, abbot of Bodhgaya, Gyantse Dpal ‘khor chos sde *gtsug lag khang*, Lam ‘bras lha khang, wall painting, 1425. (Photo: M. Henss, 1990).



52 Chinese embroidered silks and *lampas* weaves of early Ming dynasty, detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).



53 Head of the central Buddha with traces of the original iconometric grid, detail of Śākyamuni *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).



59 Two *dbang phyug ma* goddesses: the scorpion-headed *yoginī* of the south direction (right) and the goat-headed *vajra* gate guardian with noose enclosed within a circle (left).



60 The raven-headed flesh-eating goddess (one of eight *piśācī*s) with a sword (right) and the wolf-headed (?) wind goddess with a flag (left).



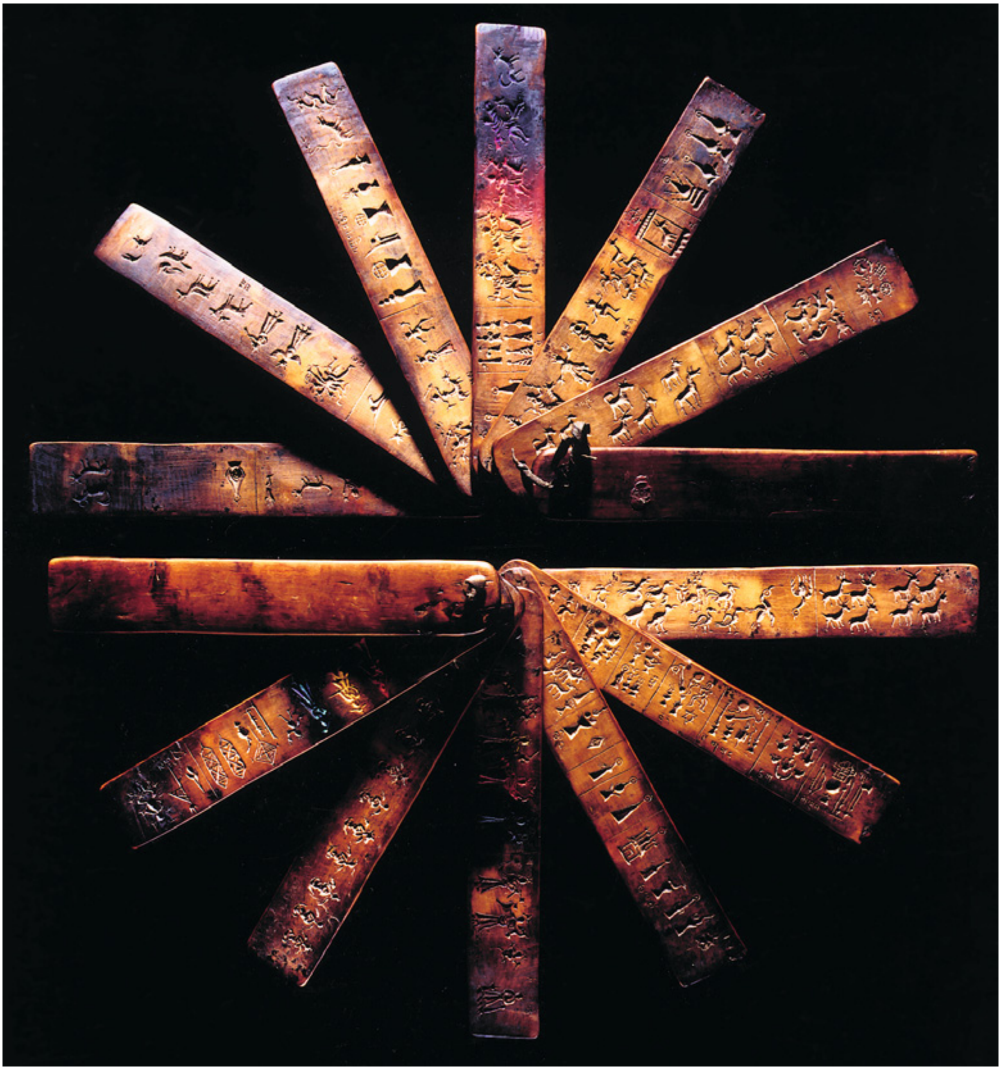
76 Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, interior view of Maitreya Hall with statue of Maitreya, June 2002. (Photo: S. Fraser).



77 Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, interior view of Maitreya Hall (lower right of ground floor) with wall paintings in Reb gong style, June 2002. (Photo: S. Fraser).



81 Stone board for playing “go”, unearthed among the ruins of Byams pa mi ’gyur gling palace, Srong btsan sgam po’s birthplace. (Photo: Dawa Zangpo).



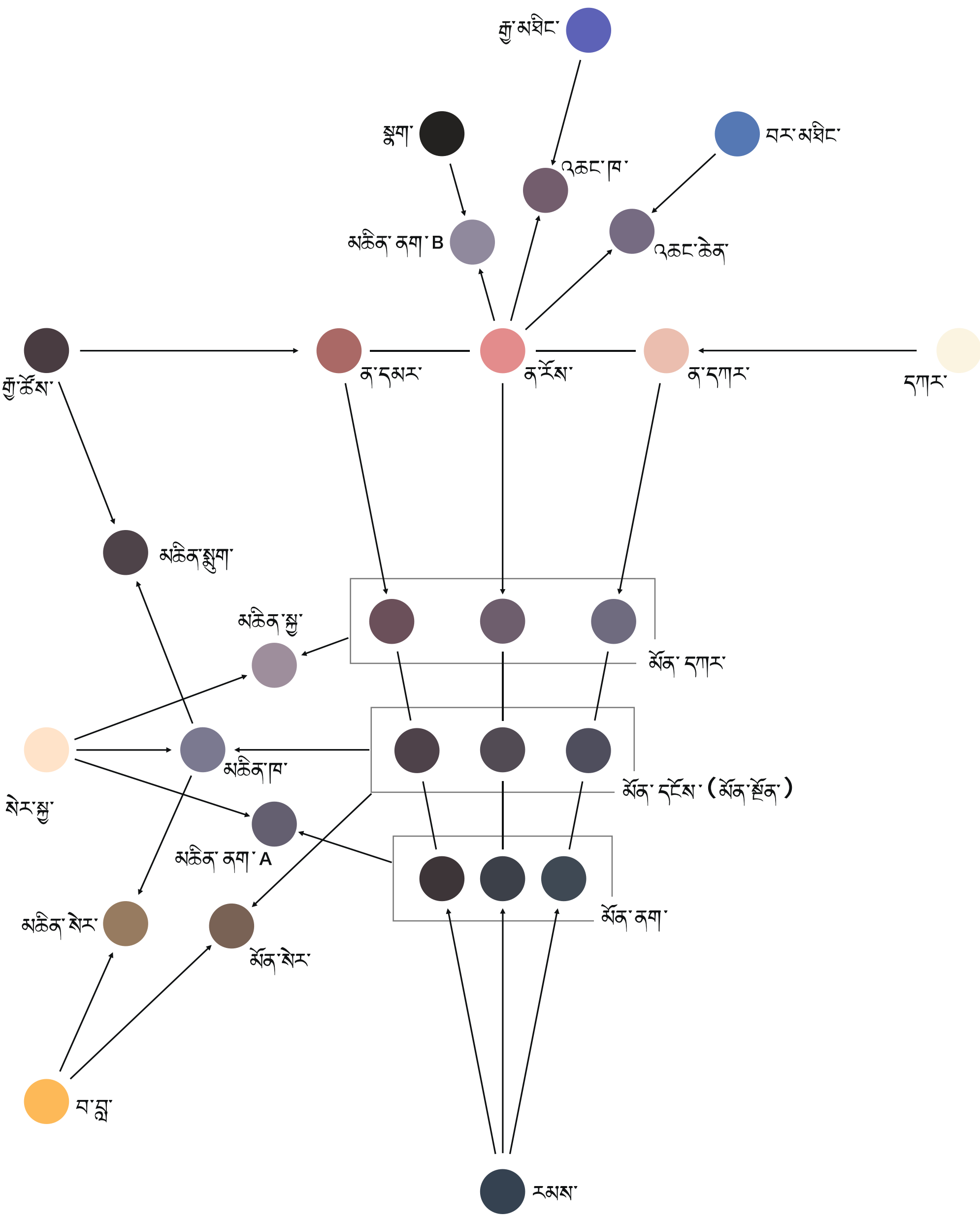
83 Set of *zan par* moulds with leather thong attached. (Photo: F. Bellino).



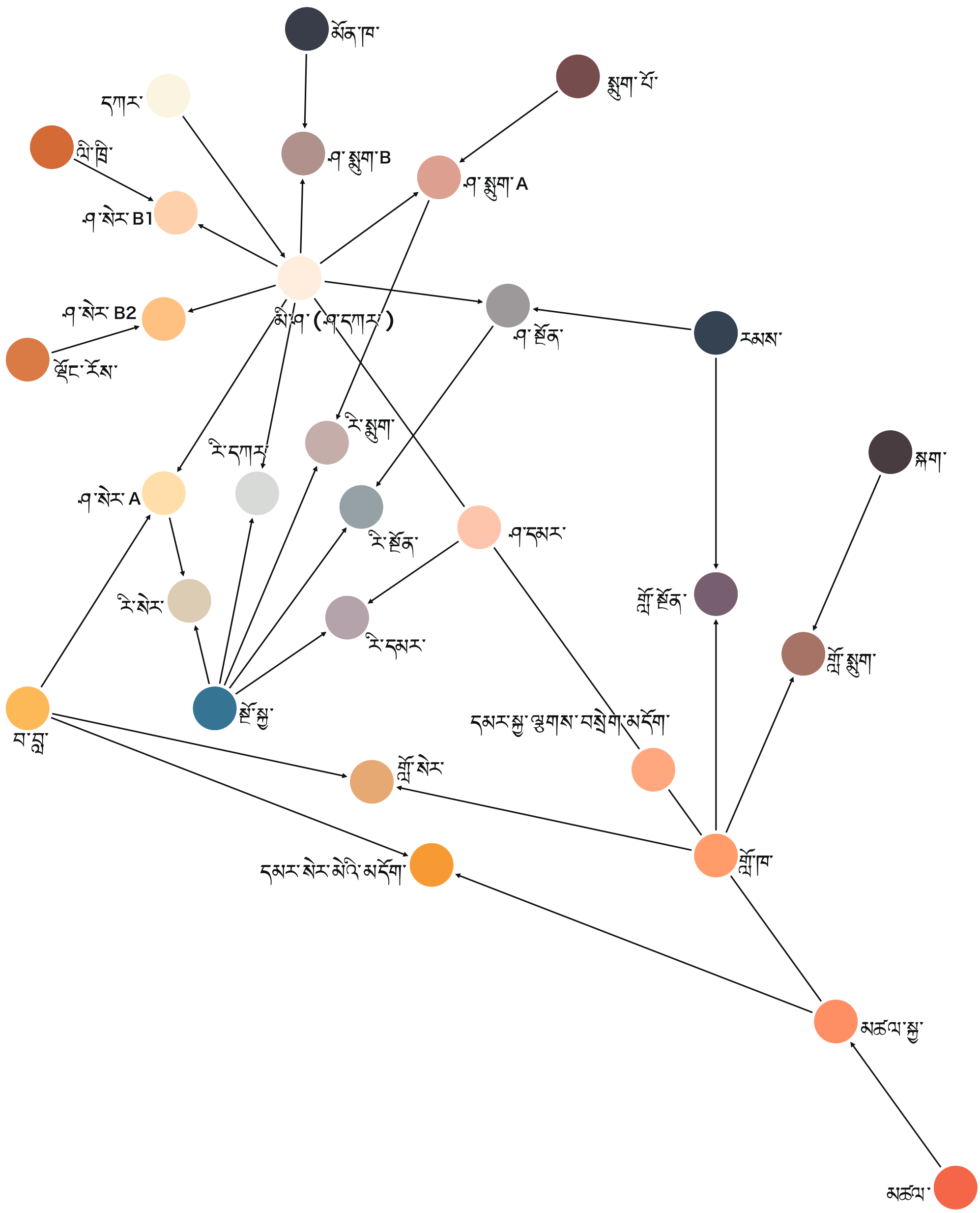
103 Purse made in Apishang, Eastern Tibet, c.1975, silver, silver gilt, steel and coral, 13 cm. wide.



104 Tinder pouch made in Apishang, Eastern Tibet, c.1975, silver, silver gilt, steel and turquoise, 15 cm. wide.



106 De'u dmar dge bshes's *na ros*, *mon kha* and *mchin kha*.



107 De'u dmar dge bshes's *mi sha* and *glo kha*.



108 Fetal development, painted by Romio Shrestha after a Tibetan *thang ka*, Katmandu, late 1980s – early 1990s. New York, American Museum of National History (No. 70.3/5468).



113 Conduct, painted by Romio Shrestha after a Tibetan *thang ka*, Katmandu, late 1980s – early 1990s. New York, American Museum of National History (No. 70.3/5483).



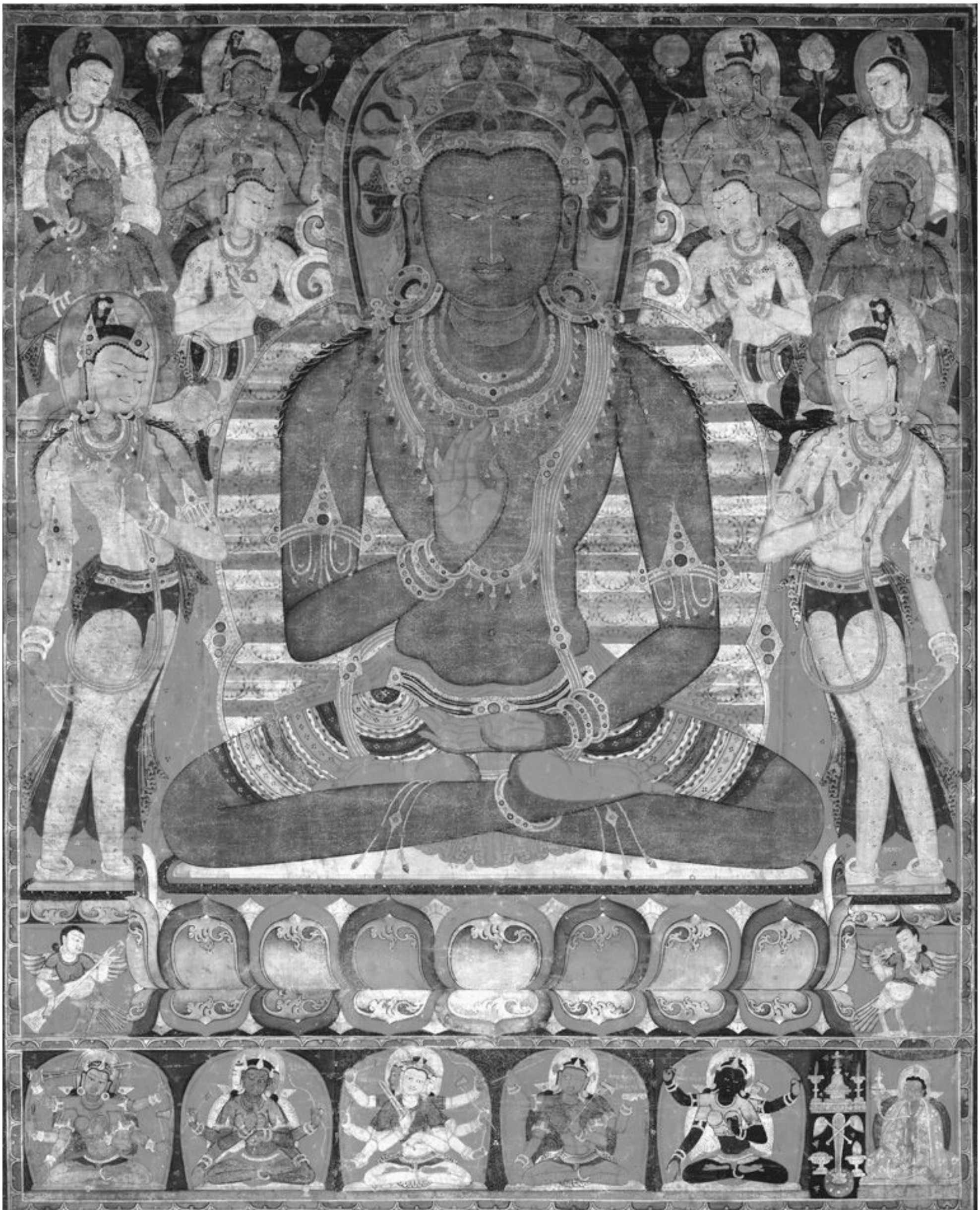
3 Ma ṇi dung phyur. (Photo: A. Alexander, 2000).



4 Restoration of *span bad* frieze using the traditional techniques and materials. (Photo: A. Alexander, 1999).



5 Dur khrod bdag po, 19th-century mural retraced and varnished during private restoration in 1995, *'Du khang*, south wall east of entrance (Photo: J. Mueller 2003).



6 Amoghasiddhi and the Pañcarakṣā, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 68.9 x 54 cm. (Purchase, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Philanthropic Fund Gift, 1991.74).



12 Detail of the central panel with Vairocana, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (The Avery Brundage Collection, 1991.1).



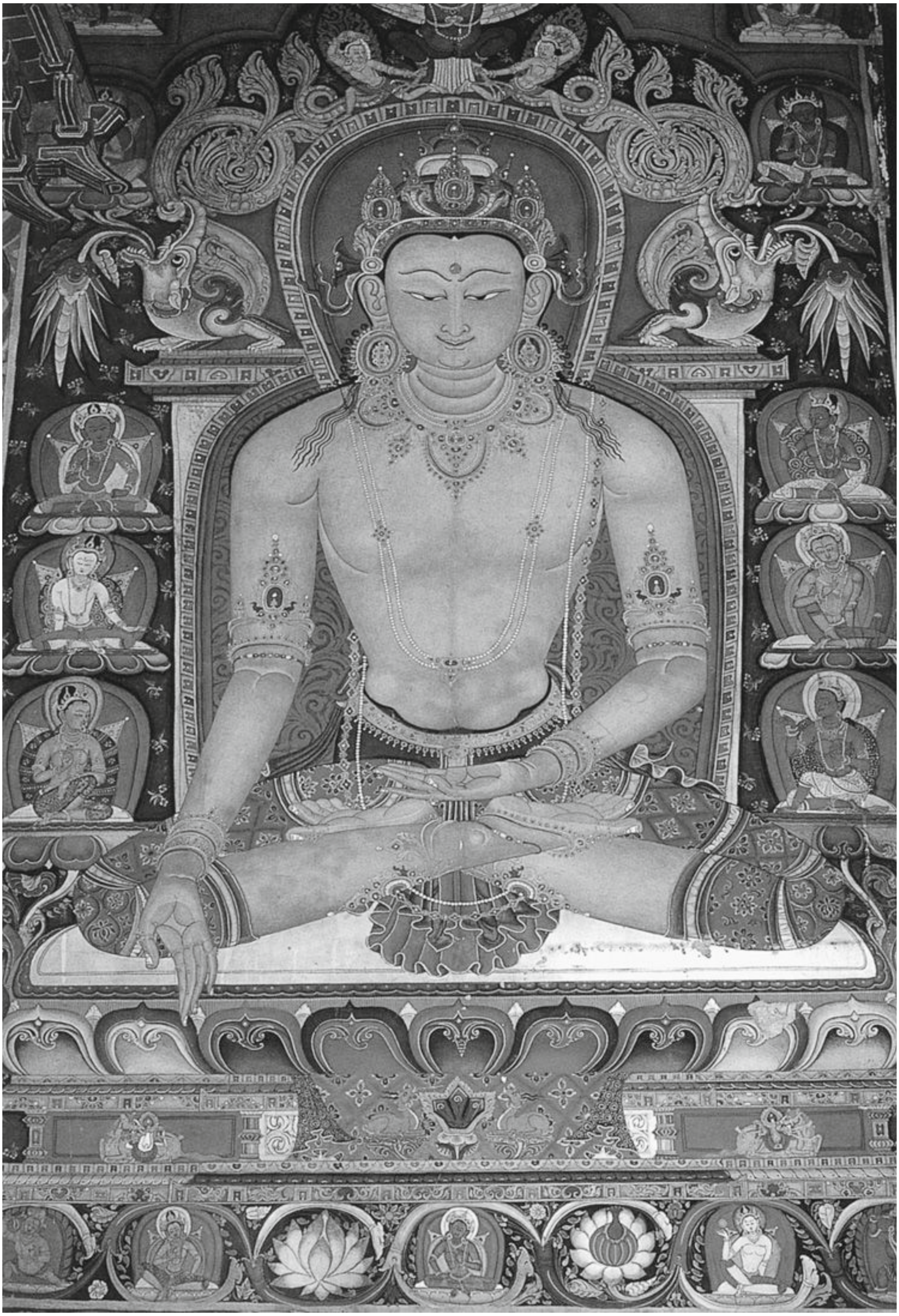
13 Śākyamuni, *śrāvaka*s, *bodhisattva*s and donors, Gra thang monastery, inner sanctum, west wall (After Henss 1994: fig.5).



14 Head of a *bodhisattva*, Gra thang monastery, inner sactum (After Heller 1999: pl.46).



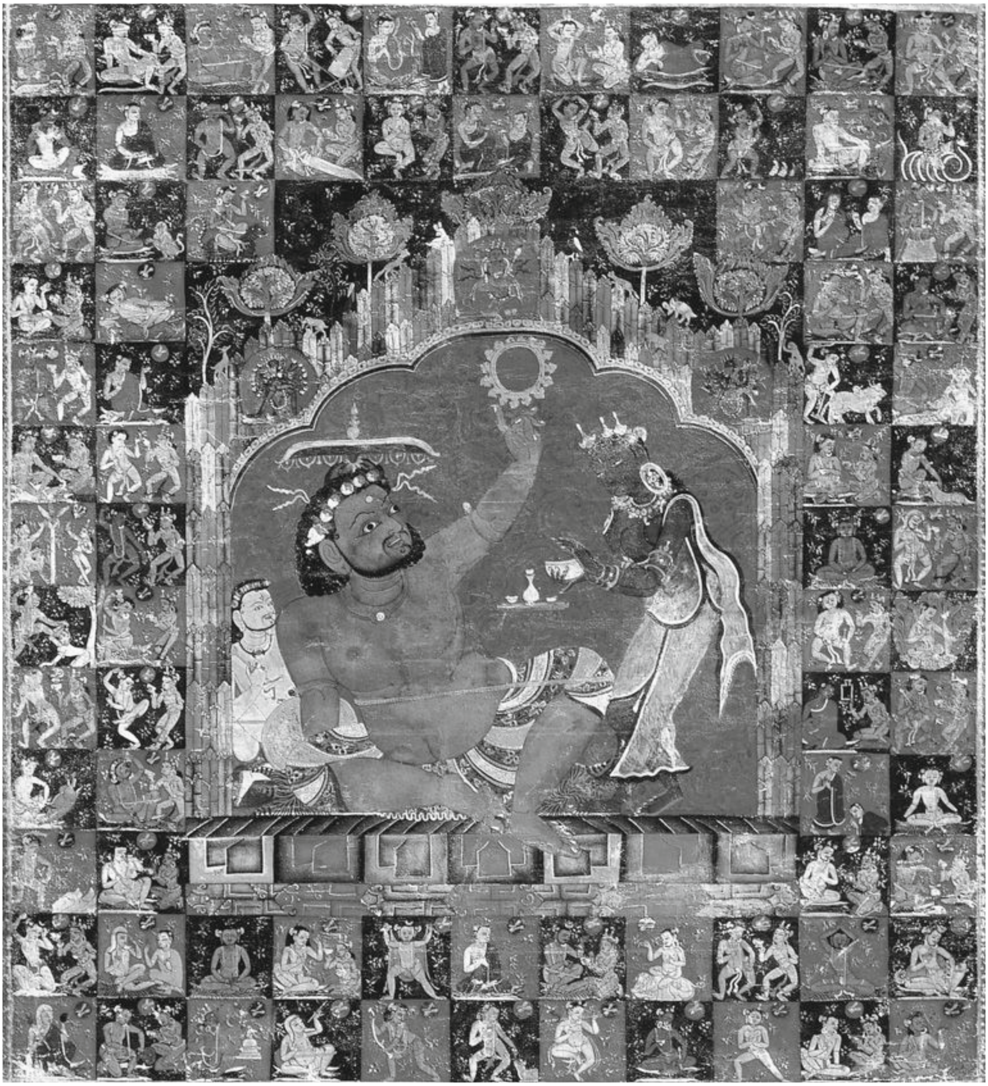
20 Ratnasambhava, Zhwa lu, Sgo gsum lha khang. (After Kreijger 1997: pl.195).



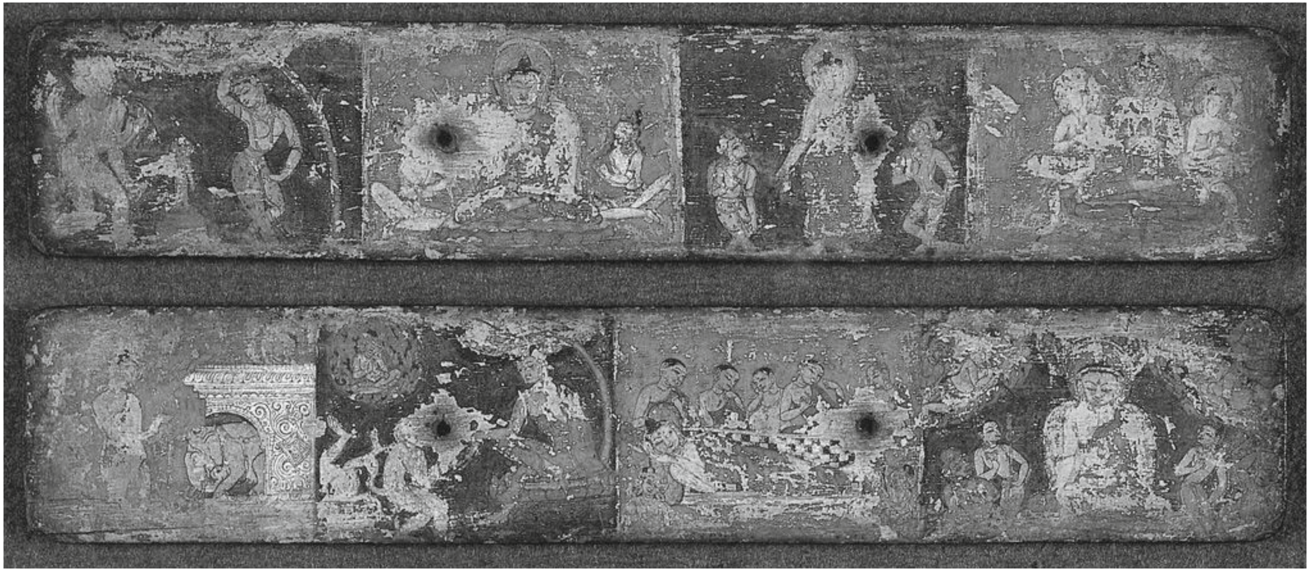
21 Ratnasambhava, Zhwa lu, Bse sgo ma lha khang. (After Kossak and Singer 1998: fig.21).



25 Mañjuśrī, *Pañcarakṣā*, University Library Cambridge (Add.1688, fol. 20r). (After Pal and Meech Pekarik, n.d.: pl.8).



26 Virūpa, The Kronos Collection (After Kossak and Singer 1998: No.35).



27 Scenes from the life of the Buddha, MS covers, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, London, British Library (Or.14203). (After Zwalf 1985: No.159, S 114).



28 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, MS cover, Oxford, Bodleian Library (MS Sansk.a.7). (After Barrett 1980: 52).



39 A *nakṣatra*, Zhwa lu monastery, *mgon khang*.



40 Mañjuśrī, Grwa thang monastery.



41 Head of a *bodhisattva*, Zhwa lu monastery, eastern corridor of the old *mgon khang*.



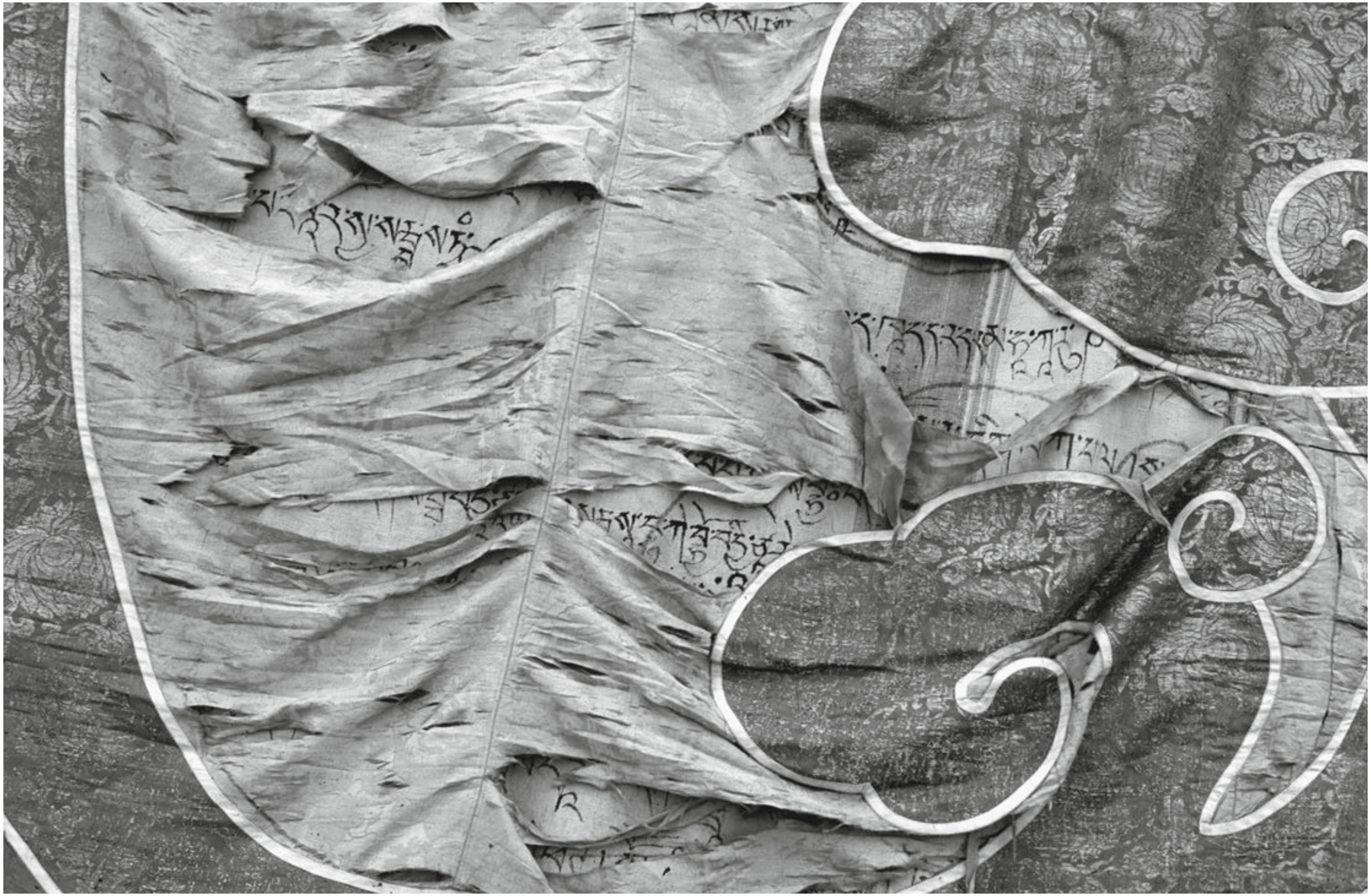
43 Avalokiteśvara, detail of Śākyamuni *gos sku* (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).



44 Sems dpa' chen po chos kyi rin chen (13th century), abbot of Gnas rnying, detail of Śākyamuni *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).



45 ’Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan (1364-1422), abbot of Gnas rnying, detail of Śākyamuni *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2001).



46 Damaged silk brocades with inscriptions beneath on the backing cloth, detail of Maitreya *gos sku*. (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).



54 Upper section of the *thang ka* wall in the Dpal ’khor chos sde seen from behind, while the *thang ka* is on display on the front-side (banners are pulled up and down from the upper gallery). (Photo: M. Henss, 2000).



55 Maṇi Lha khang, accessed by a bridge, in its setting by a stream across from the village of Rigna.



56 Exterior view of Maṇi Lha khang, its walled courtyard enclosing the front of the temple, which gives access to the temple's two principal rooms.



57 Red-haired ashen and blue-coloured demonic deities (left and centre) and a fierce blue-winged Vajraheruka Buddha clasping his consort (right).



58 Heruka Kīla grasping his *kīla* (*phur ba*), in the centre of the wall depicting the wrathful deities.



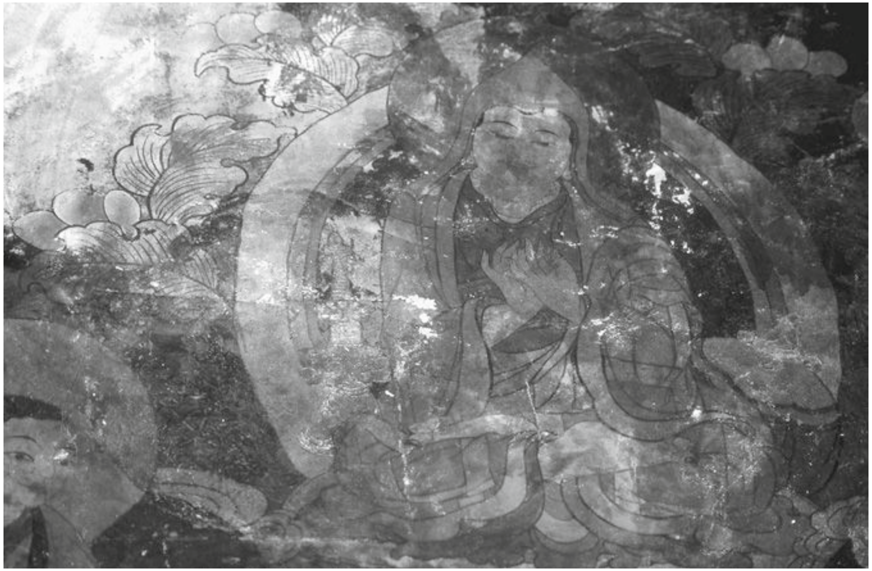
61 Two flesh-eating *piśācīs*: the lion-headed goddess of the east direction holding a corpse (right) and the tiger-headed goddess of the south direction with entrails in her mouth (left).



62 The deer-headed power goddess of the west holding a vase and a scarf terminating in human body parts (right), and the snake-headed power goddess of the east holding a lotus flower (left).



63 Atiśa with his disciples ’Brom ston on his right and Legs pa’i shes rab on his left, upper part of the entrance wall on the right of the temple doorway.



64 Atiśa in monk garb with his symbol, a small stupa, on his right.



65 The aged Legs pa' i shes rab holding a mandala that appears to have been redrawn. →



66 ’Brom ston, whose long hair indicates his layman status, holding a red lotus flower.



67 Sha bo Tshe ring as a young man (right) with Zhang Daqian (left) and other members of the team assembled to copy medieval wall paintings in 1941-42. The group stands in front of the Yulin caves, located to the east of Mogao Caves, Dunhuang.



68 Sha bo Tshe ring holding a work being painted in his workshop, June 1999.



69 ’Jigs med nyi ma’s sketchbook used in the *mchod rten* project, Bla brang monastery, November 1992. (Photo: S. Fraser).



70 ’Jigs med nyi ma with finished and unfinished paintings made for the *mchod rten* project, Bla brang monastery, November 1992. (Photo: S. Fraser).



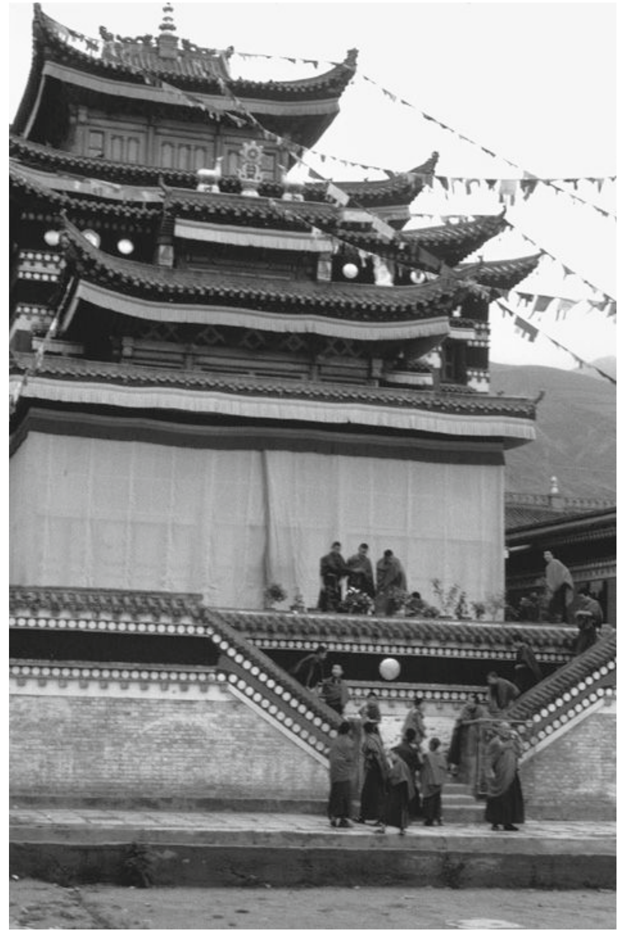
71 Nāḍī ḍākinī commissioned for the *mchod rten* project (finished painting in plate 70), Bla brang monastery, November 1992. (Photo: S. Fraser).



72 Vajravārāhī commissioned for the *mchod rten* project (unfinished painting in plate 70), Bla brang monastery, November 1992. (Photo: S. Fraser).



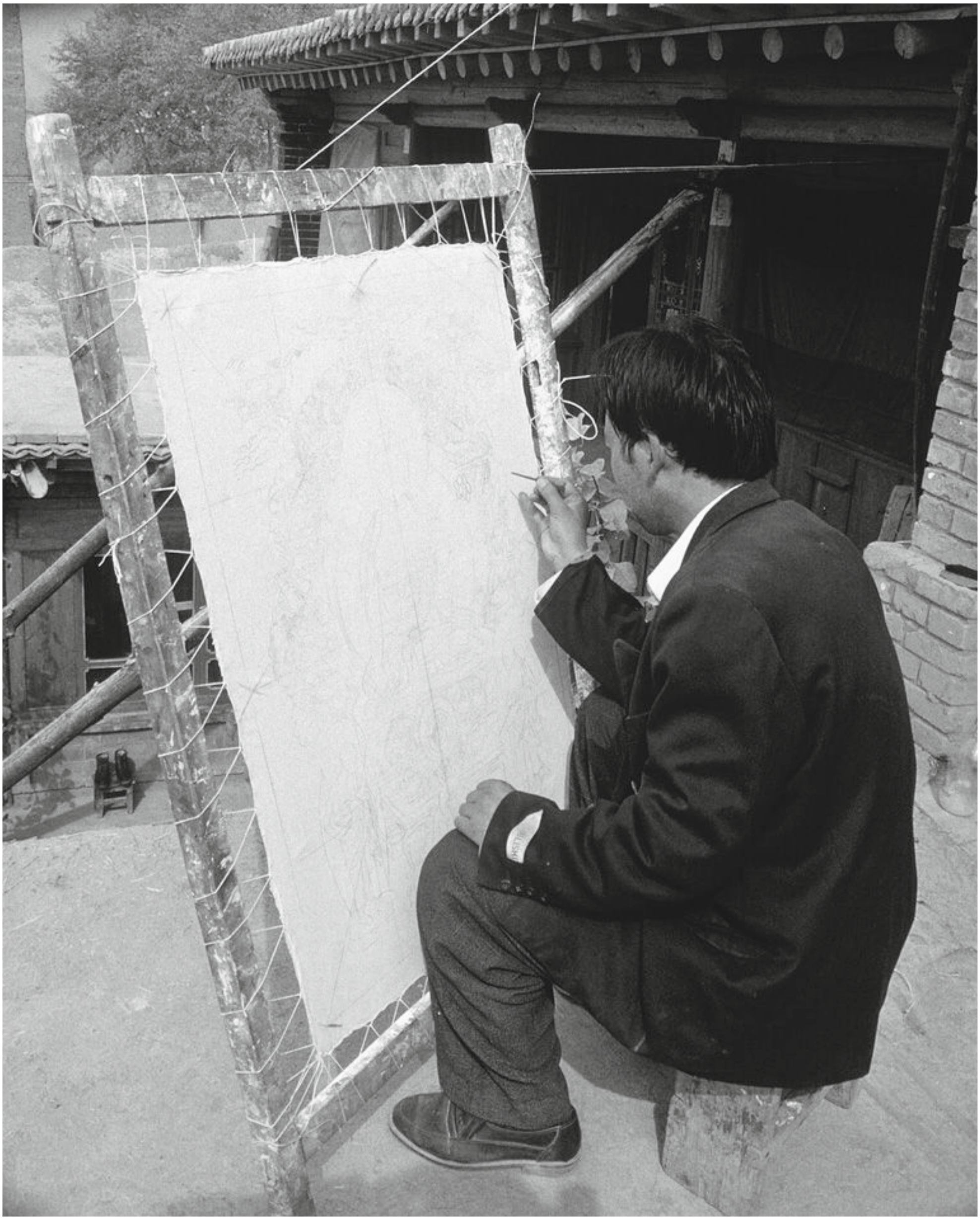
73 Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, Maitreya Hall under construction, June 1999. (Photo: S. Fraser).



74 Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, Maitreya Hall completed, June 2002. (Photo: S. Fraser).



75 Seng ge gshong ya mgo monastery, interior view (lower left of ground floor) of Maitreya Hall with wall painting in Reb gong style, June 2002. (Photo: S. Fraser).



78 Learning to trace a drawing on canvas, Seng ge gshong, June 2002. (Photo: S. Fraser).



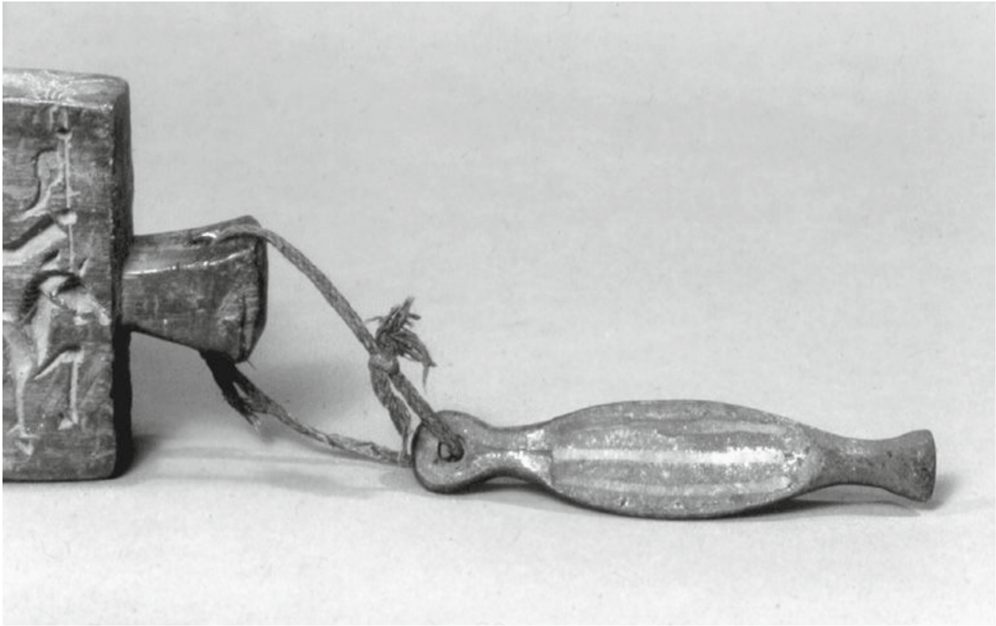
79 *Bodhisattva* with *cintāmaṇi*, painted as mirror-image of opposite figure. Dunhuang, late 9th century, ink and colours on silk, 71.0 x 17.5 cm. London, The British Museum (Stein painting 136). (Copyright: The British Museum).



80 *Bodhisattva* with censer, painted as mirror-image of opposite figure. Dunhuang, late 9th century, ink and colours on silk, 68.2 x 19 cm. London, The British Museum (Stein painting 125). (Copyright: The British Museum).



82 A six-sided *zan par*. (Photo: F. Bellino).



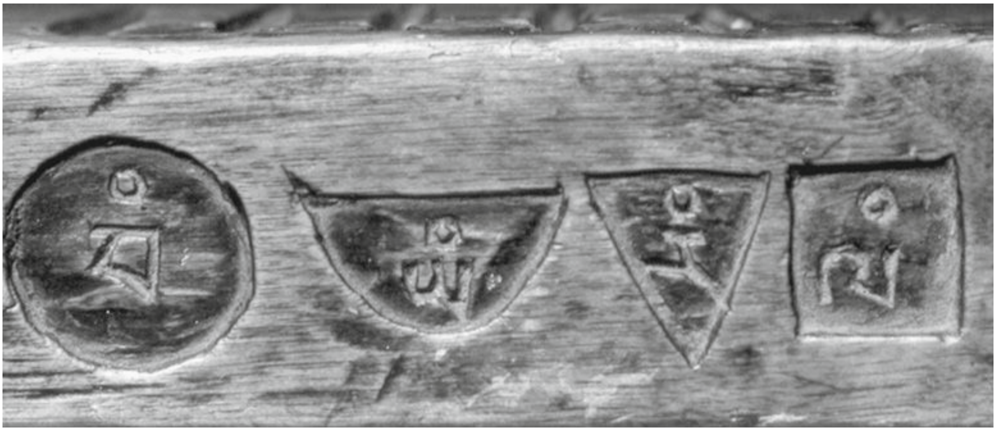
84 The *rin chen bdar*, made of five precious metals. (Photo: Z. Fleming).



85 The animal kingdom. (Photo: Z. Fleming).



86 The *bdud bzhi*. (Photo: Z. Fleming)



87 The four elements. (Photo: Z. Fleming).



88 The household. (Photo: F. Bellino).



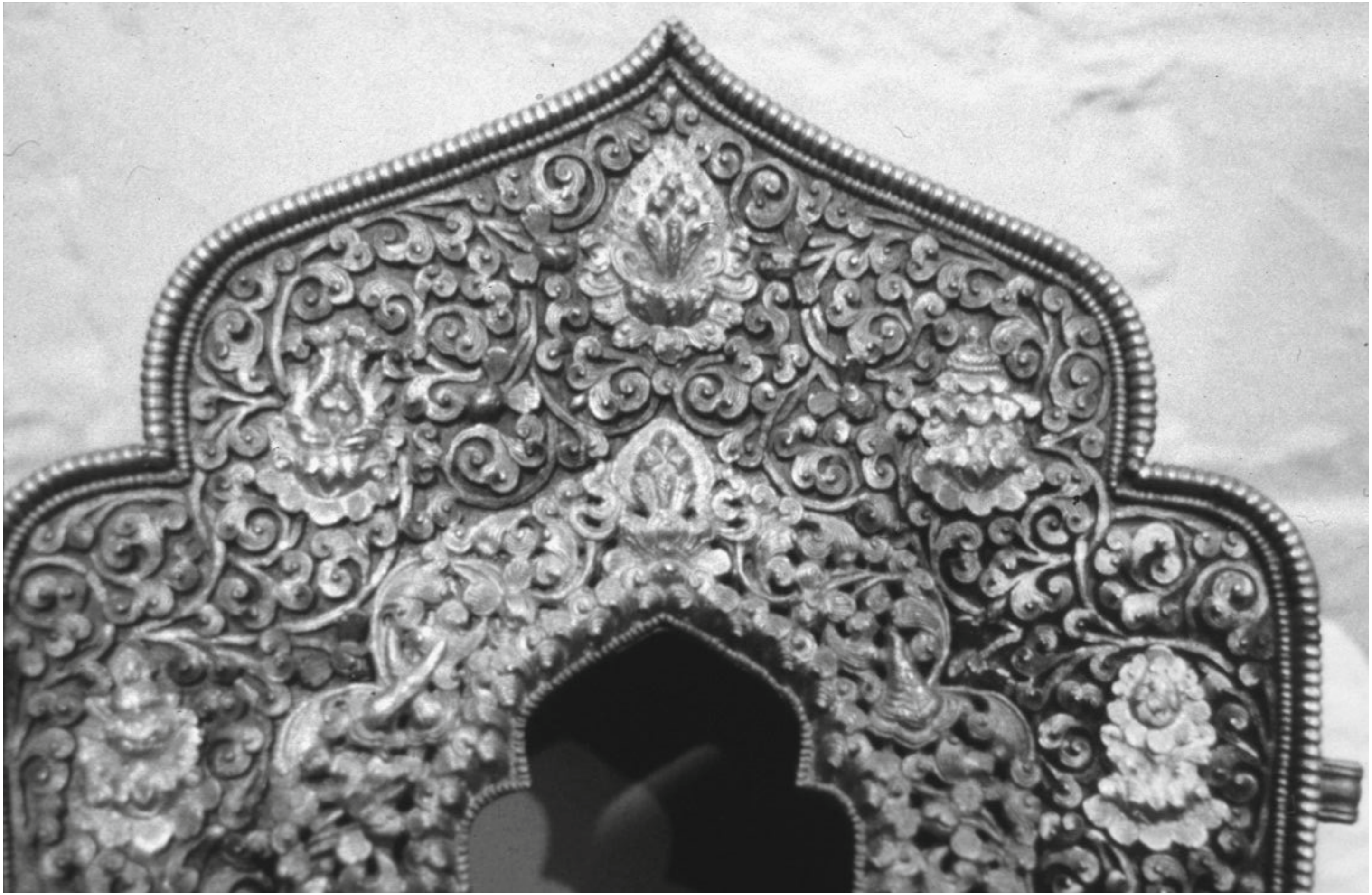
89 The *liṅga*. (Photo: F. Bellino).



90 Monks performing the ceremony. (Photo: Z. Fleming).



91 Ritual implements. (Photo: Z. Fleming).



92 *Shing lo pa tra,* scrollwork detail from a *ga'u*, Eastern Tibet, 20th century, silver (Private collection).



93 *Sa lo ma pa tra*, detail from a *ga'u* made in Lhasa, silver (Private collection).



94 Scrollwork from side of a beer jug, Central or Southern Tibet, late 19th century, copper and silver (Private collection).



95 The “Eight Auspicious Emblems”, *ga’u*, Eastern Tibet, 20th century, silver and silver gilt, 20 cm. high, 15 cm. wide (Private collection).



96 *Tsi pa ta* or "Face of Glory" on a large *ga'u*, Eastern Tibet, c.19th century, silver and silver gilt (Ethnology Museum of Zürich University, No. 14706).



97 *Tsi pa ta* or “Face of Glory”, Central or Southern Tibet, from a brass and copper folding table c. late 19th century (Private collection).



98 Belt hanger made in Apishang, Eastern Tibet, c.1980, silver and turquoise, 33 cm. long.



99 Belt hanger made by a Chinese silversmith, Yushu market, Eastern Tibet, 2003, silver, 35 cm. long.



100 *Ga'u* made by a Chinese silversmith, Yushu market, Eastern Tibet, 2003, silver, 15 cm. high.



101 Detail of plate from a belt made by a Chinese silversmith at Yushu, Eastern Tibet, 2003, silver, 22 cm. long.



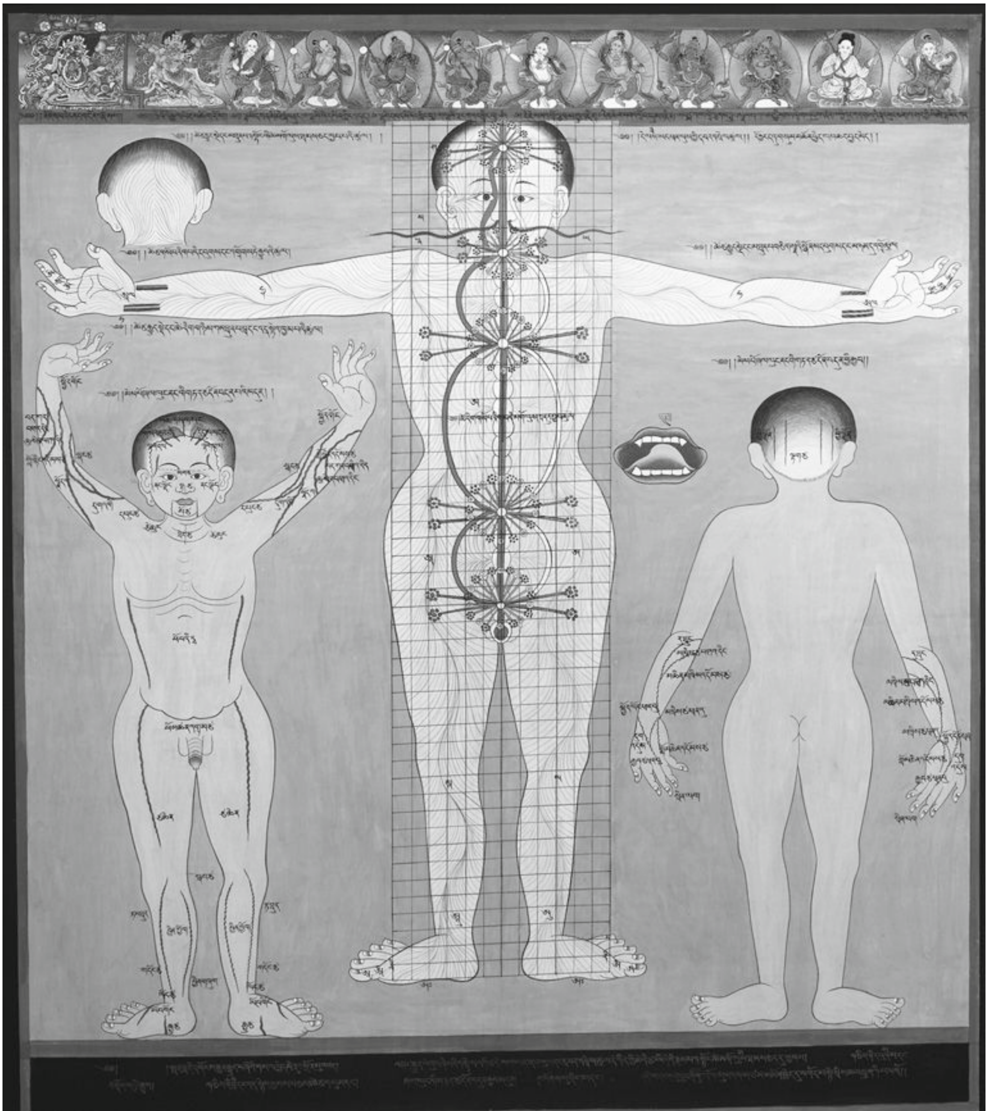
102 "Gnya' lam" *ga'u*, Gangtok, Sikkim, 20th century, silver and silver gilt, 16 cm. high (Private collection).



105 *Ga'u* made in Apishang, Eastern Tibet, c.1960, silver and silver gilt, 19 cm. high, 15 cm. wide.



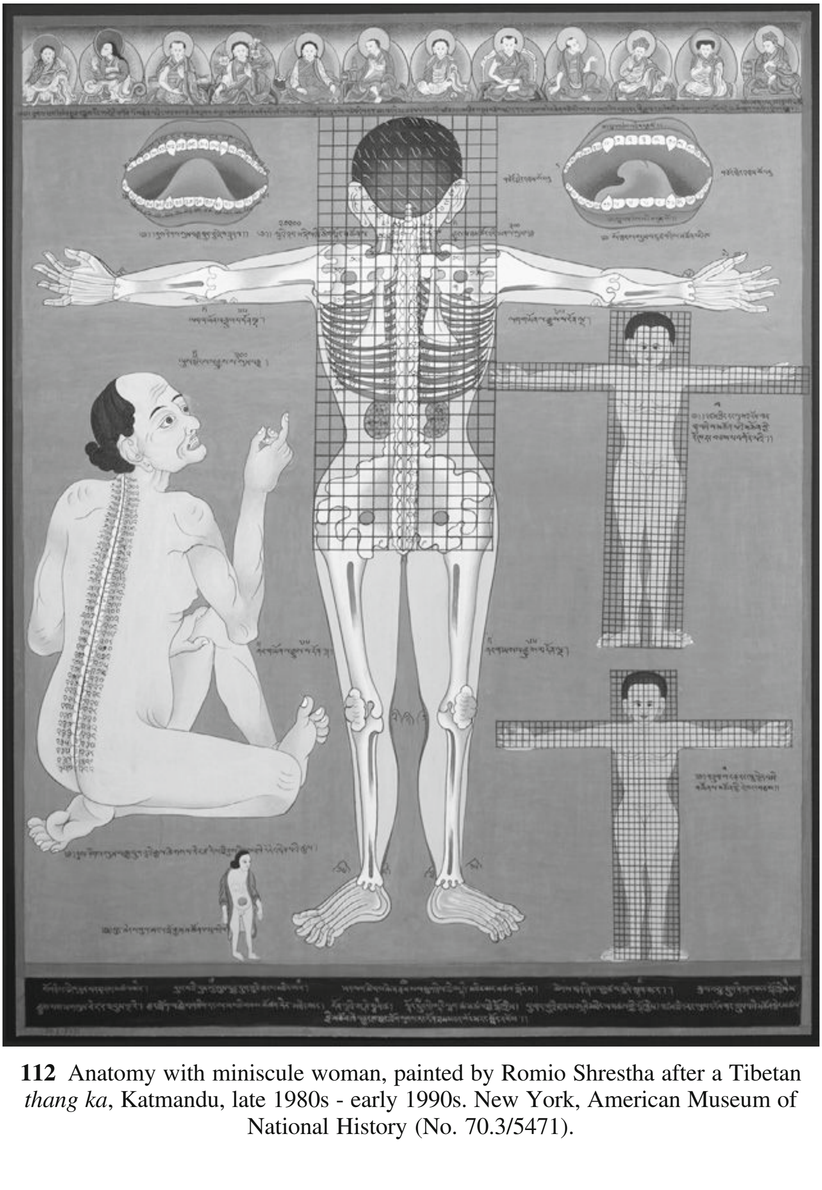
109 Midwives. Detail of colour plate 108.



110 Channels of the body, painted by Romio Shrestha after a Tibetan *thang ka*, Katmandu, late 1980s - early 1990s. New York, American Museum of National History (No. 70.3/5475).



111 Detail of colour plate 108.



112 Anatomy with miniscule woman, painted by Romio Shrestha after a Tibetan *thang ka*, Katmandu, late 1980s - early 1990s. New York, American Museum of National History (No. 70.3/5471).



114 The first photograph of the Leiden album: Lhasa seen from the east.

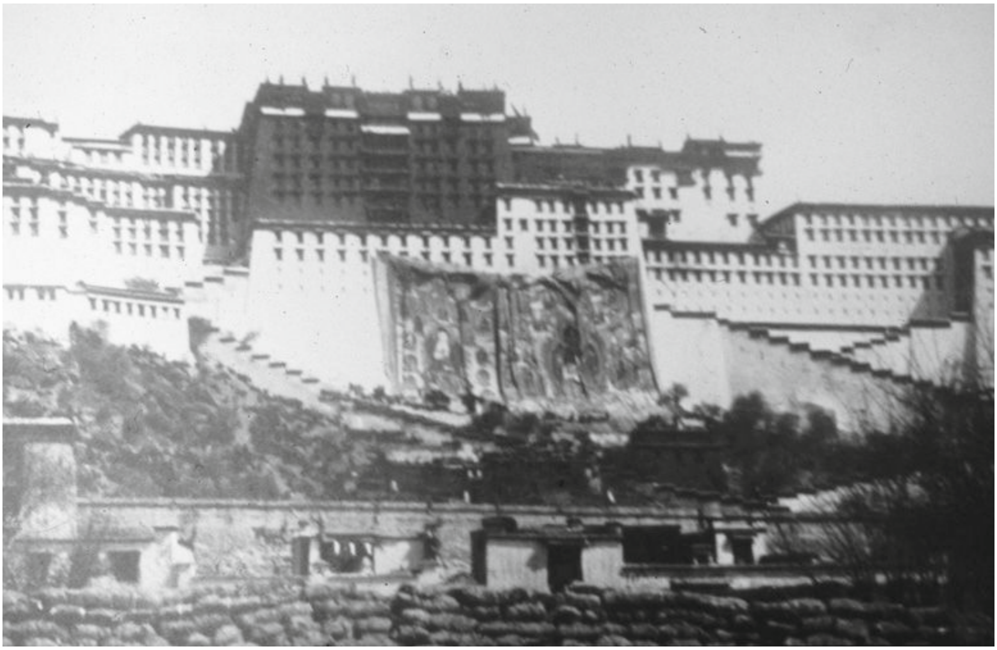




115 Portraits of G. Tsybikoff as a student at St. Petersburg University (left) and of O. Norzunov (right). (From: Leonov 1991: 111-112, figs 4 and 10).


116 Ganden Kang Shar and Ramoche (photo No. 2 of the Leiden album).


117 The Potala palace from the south (photo No. 4 of the Leiden album).



118 The Potala palace during the Tsok Chöd festival (photo No. 6 of the Leiden album).



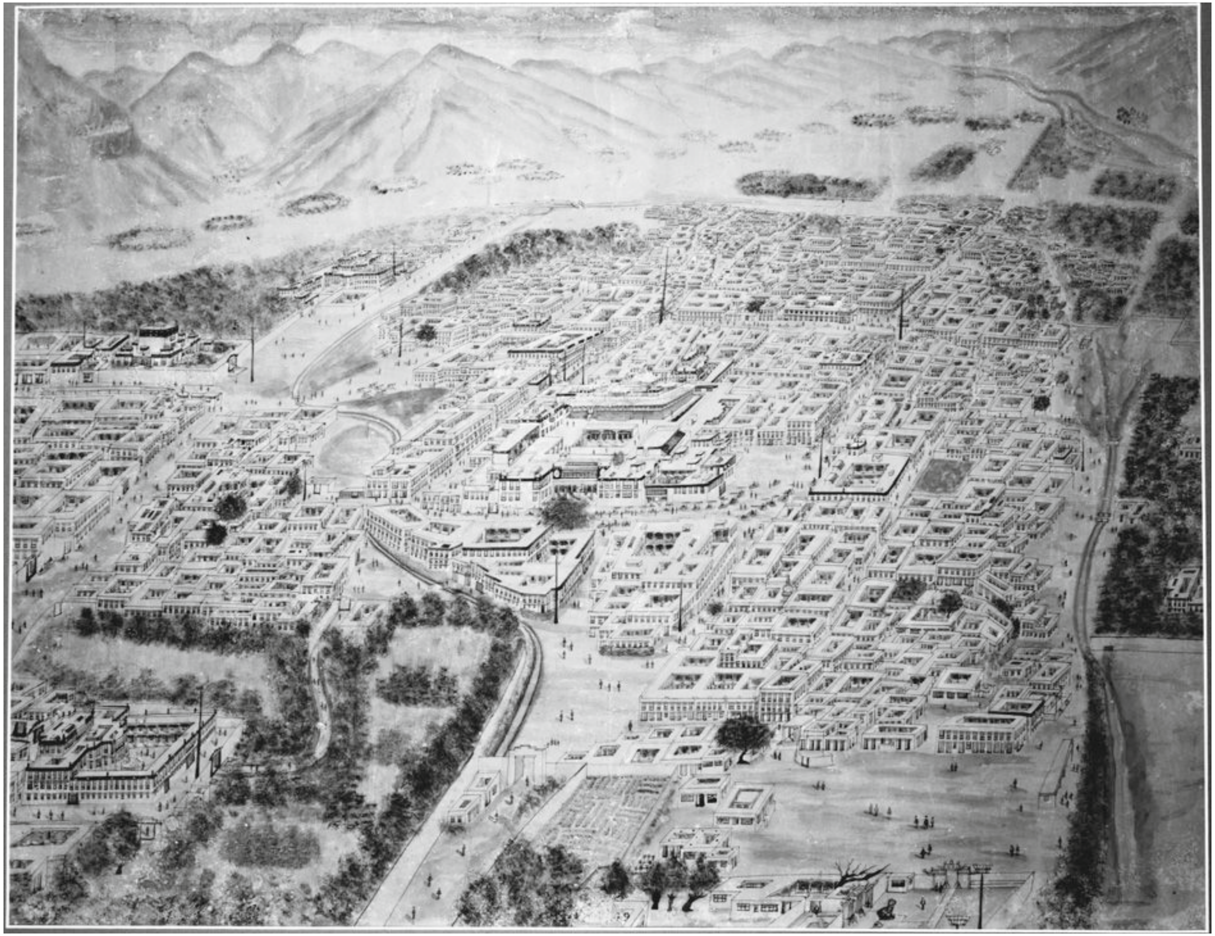
119 The Potala and the Lingkhor from the north-west (photo No. 9 of the Leiden album).


120 Ganden Khang Shar (photo No. 12 of the Leiden album).

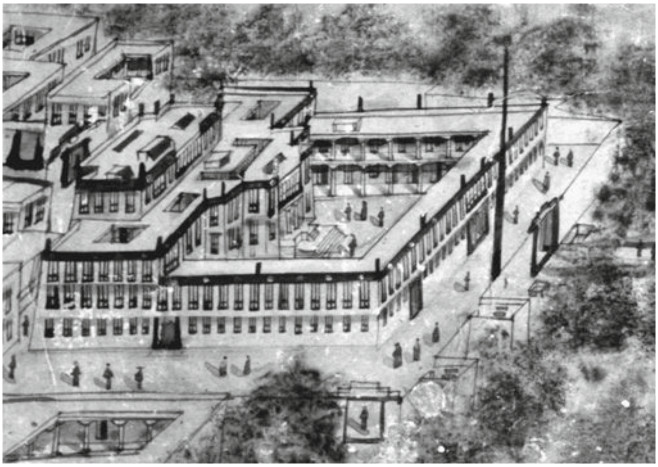

121 The Yutok bridge from the west (photo No. 13 of the Leiden album).



122 Bar Chöten from the east (photo No. 14 of the Leiden album).



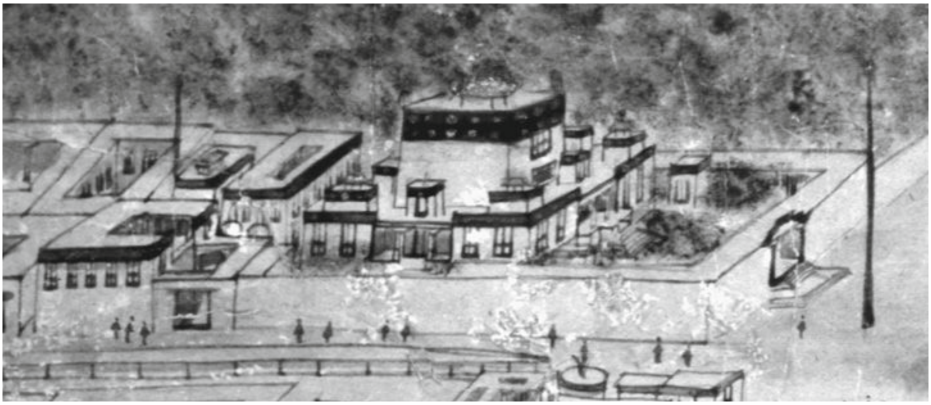
123 The "Kathmandu drawing", bird's-eye perspective of central Lhasa by an unknown artist, before 1912, Indian ink and watercolour on paper, 50 x 66 cm (Private collection, Oslo).



124 Tengyeling monastery, detail of the Kathmandu drawing.



125 East Rigsum chapel (?) (left) and Karmashar temple (right), detail of the Kathmandu drawing.



126 Jebumkhang temple and north Rigsum chapel, detail of the Kathmandu drawing.



127 Detail of the Ryukoku *thang ka*. (Photo: M. Aris).